

North East Lincolnshire Council

Landscape Character Assessment



February 2010

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Preface

Preface

In March 1995 landscape consultants, Gillespies, were commissioned jointly by Humberside County Council and the Countryside Commission to undertake a Landscape Assessment of the County of Humberside. The brief for the assessment identified the main need for the preparation of a countywide landscape assessment and guidelines as the following:

- Assist in the formulation of Local Authority policies;
- Aid development control;
- Enable a sustainable approach to landscape through policy formulation and action;
- Aid the monitoring and influencing of landscape change;
- Help in targeting areas in most need of resources;
- Act as an aid to the decision making of land managers.

With Local Government Reorganisation in 1996, Humberside County was abolished and the area was split between four new unitary authorities – East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire – thus negating the need for a countywide landscape assessment. The purpose of this Landscape Assessment is, therefore, to provide a landscape character assessment and accompanying guidelines for the Borough of North East Lincolnshire, using the original assessment carried out for Humberside. The notes have been amended and updated to show changing organisation titles and to reflect the Countryside Agency’s publication “Countryside Character, Volume 3: Yorkshire and the Humber” (CCP 357) produced in 1998. (The Countryside Agency was succeeded in 2006 by Natural England.)

The Landscape Assessment and guidelines will be used as a basis for ensuring landscape considerations are taken into account in the development of future Local Development Framework policy and in the allocation of sites. It will also be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

This document falls into several sections:

- **Section 1** – Introduction provides a background to this assessment and describes the methodology employed to undertake the systematic assessment of the Borough’s landscape.
- **Section 2** – Summary of Landscape Assessment summarises the assessment results and provides a brief description of the Borough’s three Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and its six Local Landscape Types (LLTs).
- **Section 3** – Change in the Landscape evaluates the broad patterns of landscape change that have operated through the area, both in recent years and historically.
- **Sections 4, 5 and 6** – Landscape Assessment provide the detailed results of the landscape assessment and identify landscape guidelines for each of the three LCAs identified within the Borough. Each section is divided into three parts detailing the following:- the landscape’s character; landscape guidelines for the whole LCA and Local Issues are discussed for each LLT within the LCA.

- **Section 7** – The Way Forward summarises the assessment and guidelines and outlines a vision for the future, a strategy for the empowerment of the document.
- **Section 8** – Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines describes the means by which the landscape guidelines can influence decisions which affect the character of North East Lincolnshire’s landscape.
- **Section 9** – Further Advice lists useful contacts in relation to landscape character.

Preface

Introduction

Introduction

National Character Areas

- 1.0.1** In 1996 the former Countryside Commission and English Nature, with support from English Heritage produced *The Character of England Map*. This combines English Nature's Areas and the former Countryside Commission's countryside character areas into a map of joint character areas for the whole of England, providing a picture of the different landscape character at the national scale. (See Figure 1.1 'The Character of England Map')
- 1.0.2** The map is accompanied by descriptions of the character of each of the 159 landscape character areas, the influences determining that character, and some of the main pressures for change in each area. Further information relating to the National Character Areas can be viewed on Natural England's website at: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk>
- 1.0.3** The National Character Areas have been divided down into eight regional volumes, each of which contains descriptions of each National Character Area. Detailed information relating to the eight regional volumes can be found on the Natural England website at: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk>.
- 1.0.4** Landscape Character Areas are large and geographically distinctive areas of land, usually defined because of physical features.

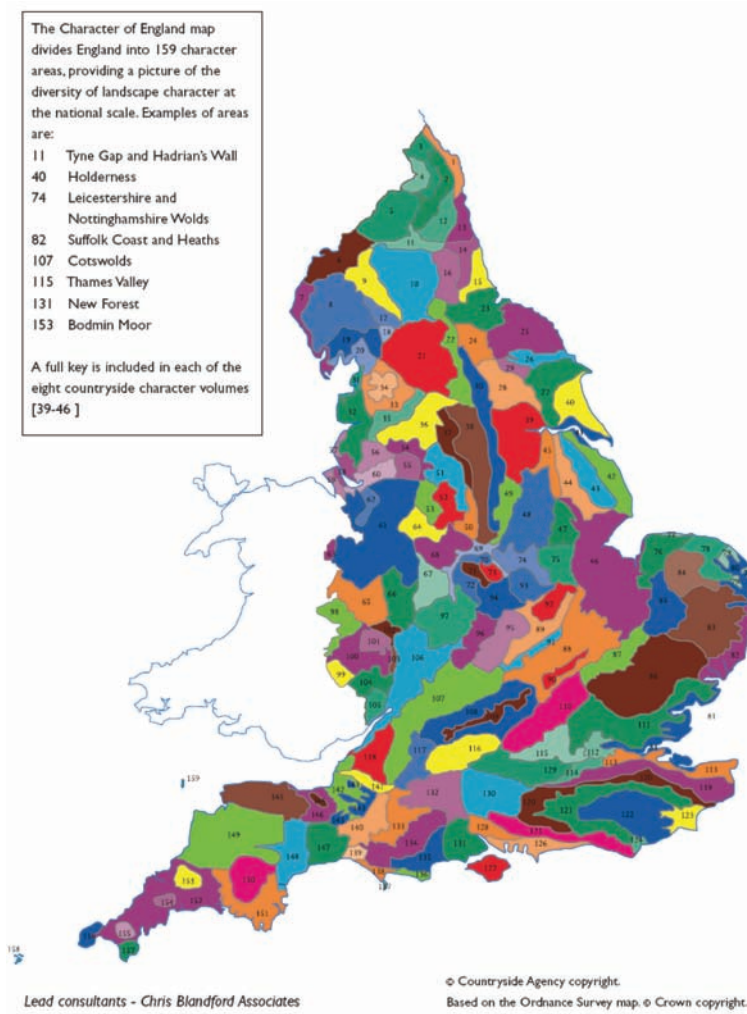


Figure 1.1 The Character of England Map

Introduction

Landscape Character Areas

1.0.5 Although the Landscape Character Areas for this document reflect the approach followed by the former Countryside Commission, the boundaries suggested by the Gillespies study vary from the National Character Area boundaries as defined by "Countryside Character Vol 3" 1998. Figure 1.2 'Landscape Character Areas' below shows the three Landscape Character Areas for North East Lincolnshire.

1.0.6 The Landscape Character Areas that apply in North East Lincolnshire are:

- A - Humber Estuary
- B - Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes
- C - Lincolnshire Wolds

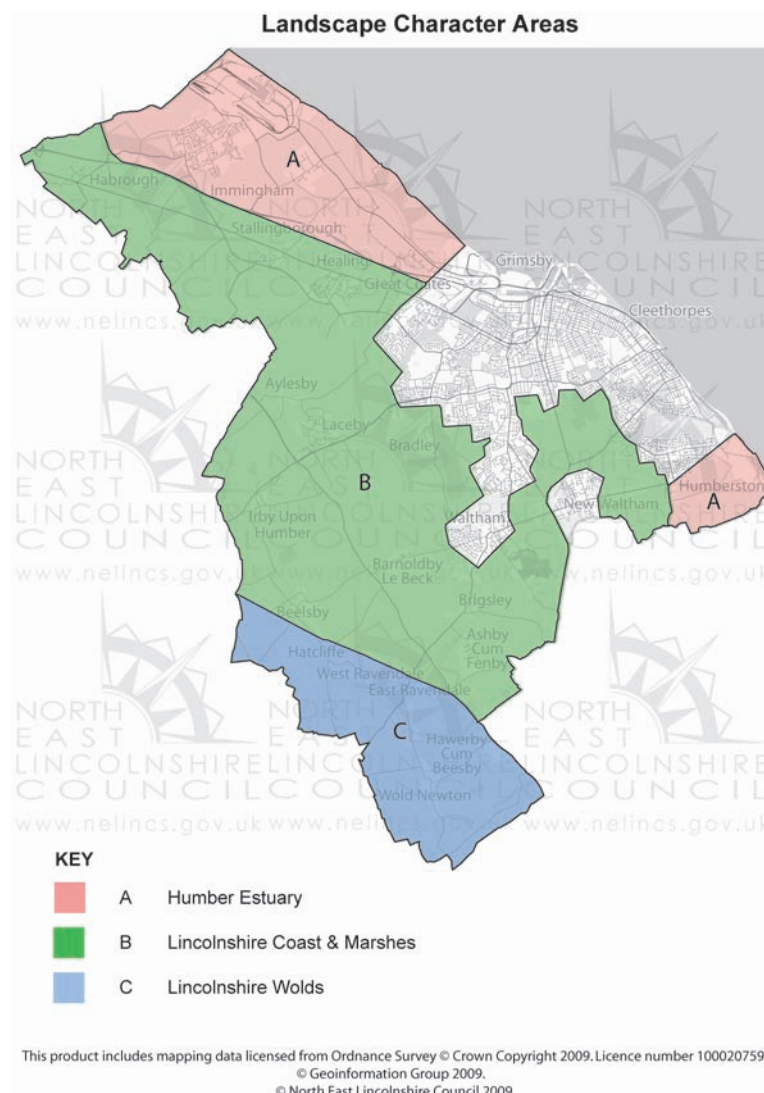
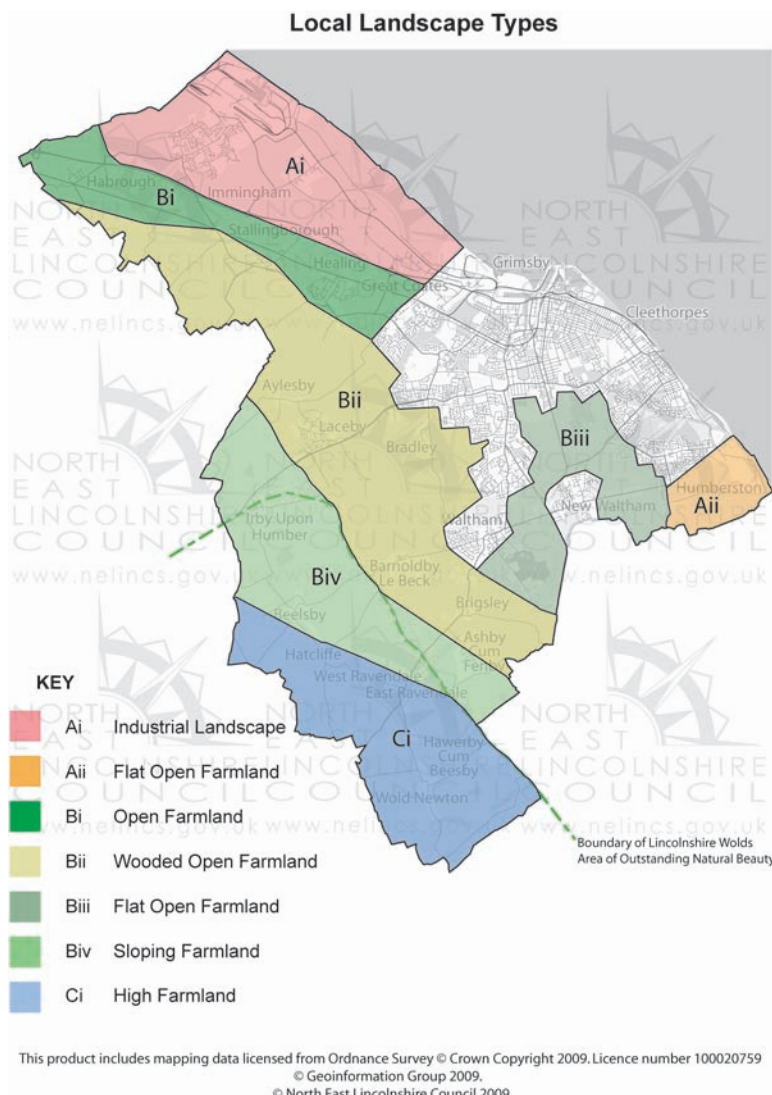


Figure 1.2 Landscape Character Areas

Local Landscape Types

1.0.7 The Landscape Character Areas are then sub-divided into various Local Landscape Types (LLTs). These are units of land with distinctive patterns of land use, topography, enclosure, ecology and vernacular. They are usually described in generic terms, e.g. “open farmland”.



Picture 1.1 Local Landscape Types

Introduction

Landscape Character Assessment

1.0.8 A Landscape Character Assessment is defined as:

"The tool that is used to help us to understand, and articulate, the character of the landscape. It helps us identify the features that give a locality its 'sense of place' and pinpoints what makes it different from neighbouring areas."⁽¹⁾

1.0.9 The term landscape refers primarily to the visual appearance of the land, including its shape, form and colours. However, the landscape is not purely a visual phenomenon. Its character relies heavily on its physiology and history. The mosaic of contributory factors influencing our interpretation of the land includes such studies as geology, topography, ecology, archaeology and architecture. In order to gather together all these inter-related strands of information, it is essential that the process of landscape assessment is structured and systematic.

Methodology

1.0.10 The methodology used in the landscape assessment broadly followed that refined for the assessment of Warwickshire County and the National Forest proposals in the Midlands (both guided by the former Countryside Commission). The methodology was consistent, both in terminology and scale, with these assessments. The consequential guidelines accord with these precedents in terms of level of detail.

1.0.11 The methodology followed a progression through four phases of work (1.0.11). First was the definition of the task, followed by a desk study. This was then backed up by a field survey and the whole then analysed to produce the assessment and guidelines.

1 The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002, Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland.

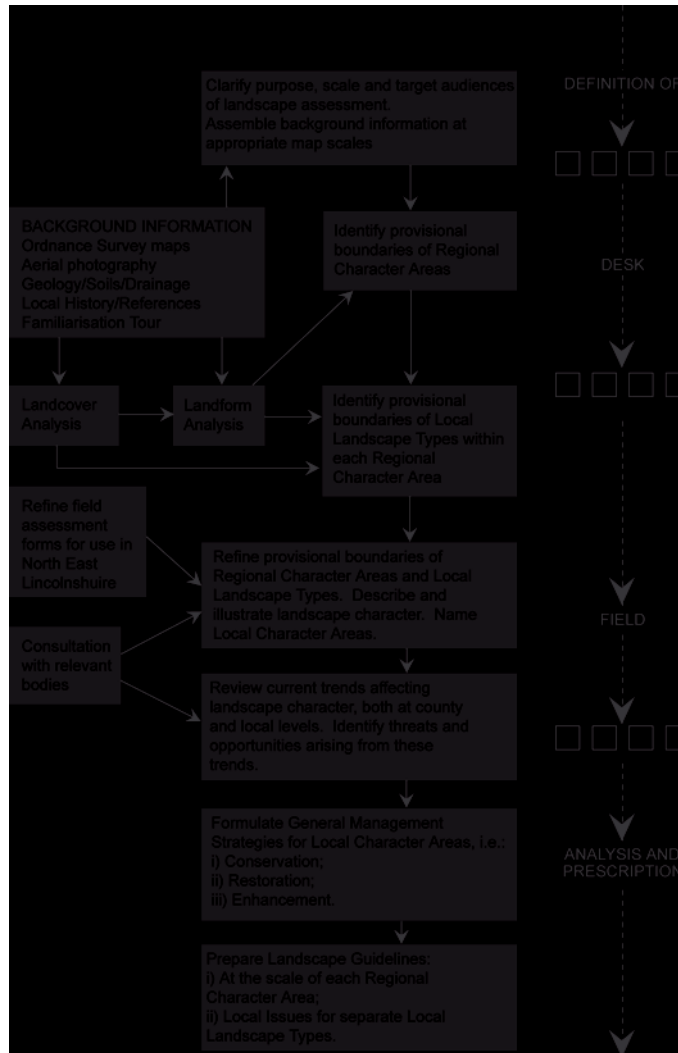


Figure 1.3 Methodology Flow Chart

Introduction

Summary of Landscape Assessment

Summary of Landscape Assessment

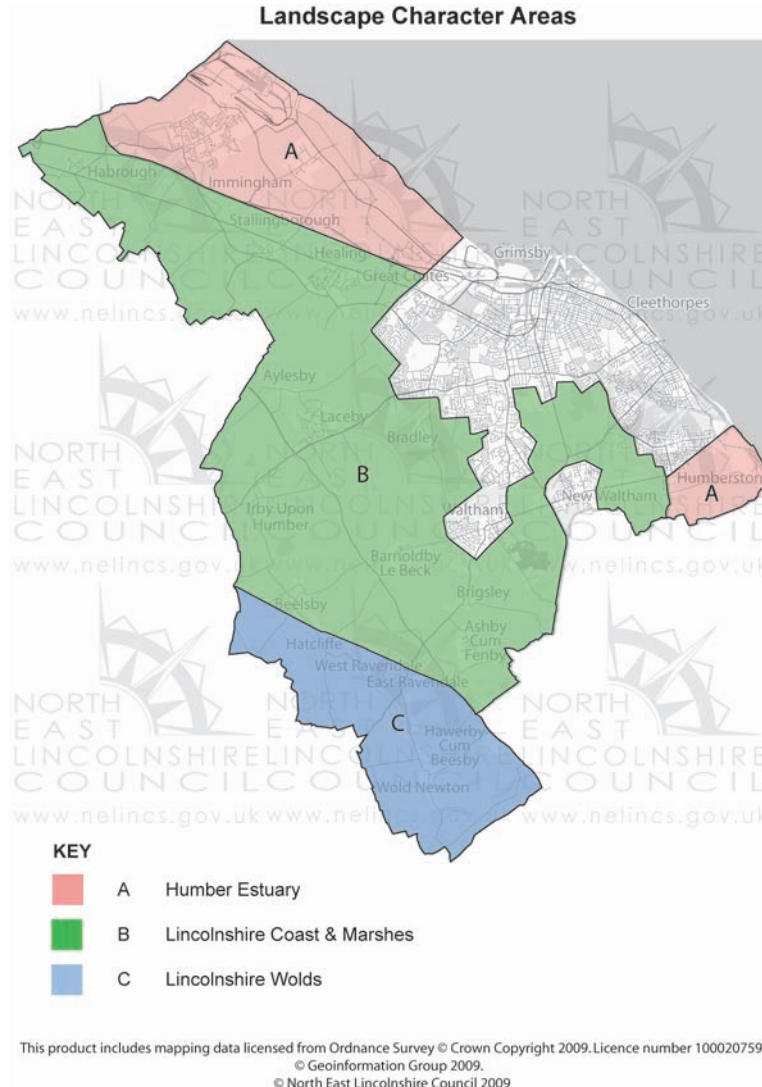


Figure 2.1 Landscape Character Areas

Summary of Landscape Assessment

2.1 Landscape Character Areas

A - Humber Estuary

Though geomorphologically perhaps the most dominant natural feature, within North East Lincolnshire the visual presence of the estuary is only generally obvious from a few prominent vantage points or from immediately alongside the river. In a local context the estuary is mostly contained by flood alleviation berms. However there is a widespread sense of being close to the estuary.



Picture 2.1 Humber Estuary

B - Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes

Slightly undulating agricultural landscape flowing off the Lincolnshire Wolds towards the coast. Local landscape diversity is provided by a varied distribution of woodlands, villages and towns.



Picture 2.2 Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes

C - Lincolnshire Wolds

Rounded chalk upland area of escarpment and dip slope, locally dissected by steeply incised valleys. Arable production dominates, set in an open, exposed landscape of extensive outer views. Woodland blocks are regular, often of a recent shelterbelt origin and villages are generally restricted to the edge of the area.



Picture 2.3 Lincolnshire Wolds

Summary of Landscape Assessment

2.1.1 Details of each LCA in terms of physical, human, ecological and visual influences are provided in Sections 4 to 6 of this guide. These also address the principal landscape issues and guidelines relevant to each LCA.

2.2 Local Landscape Types

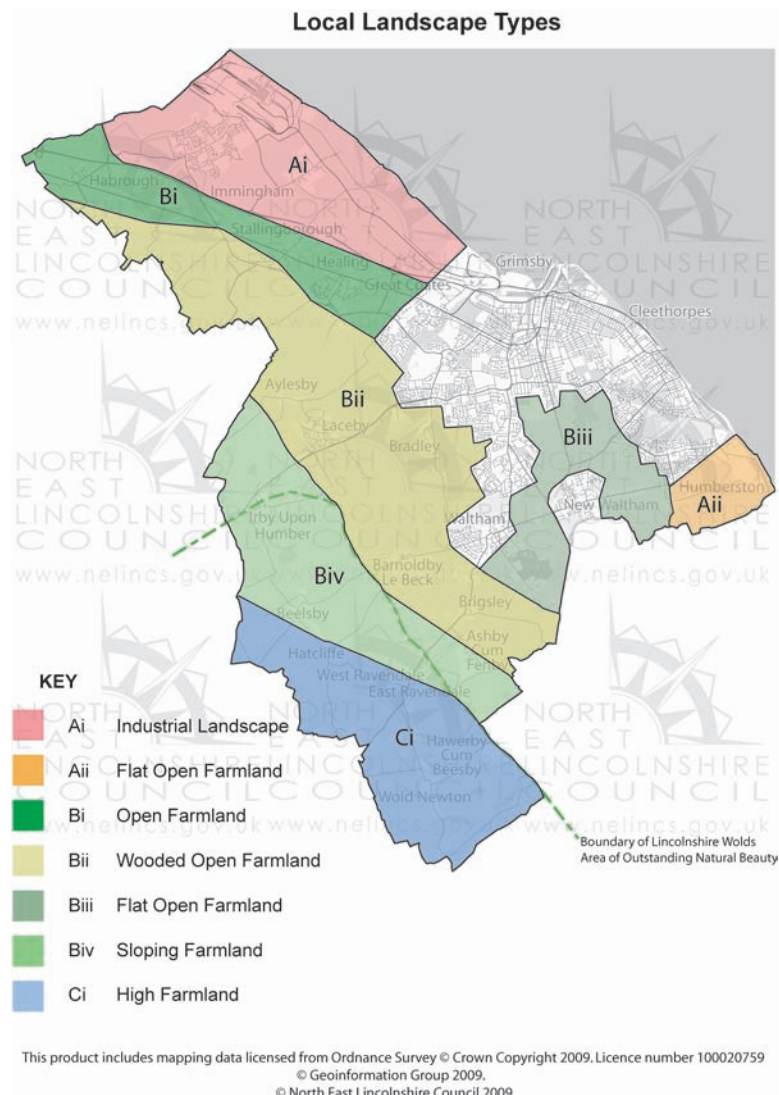


Figure 2.2 Local Landscape Types

Summary of Landscape Assessment

Ai - Humber Estuary, Industrial Landscape

2.2.1 Landscapes visually dominated by large or massive structures serving as docks, storage, factories or petrochemical installations. These structures are often separated by extensive open arable land with hedges and groups of trees playing little compositional role in the landscape.

Aii - Humber Estuary, Flat Open Farmland

2.2.2 Level, low-lying arable landscape with scattered tree and hedgerow cover providing local shelter and enclosure. Fields are large and regular, often rectilinear. Settlement is frequent in this landscape but tends to be in the form of dispersed farmsteads with large outbuildings. Villages are nucleated and tend to be well separated.

Bi - Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes, Open Farmland

2.2.3 The typical English lowland landscape with open arable fields set in undulating or gently rolling terrain. Locally, enclosure is provided by hedgerows, trees, copses and the regular presence of villages. The nature of the topography is closely related to the underlying drift and solid geology. Areas of glacial till and clays tend to be softly undulating while in areas such as the Jurassic Hills the influence of the solid geology is greater, creating a gently rolling landscape of more open aspect.

Bii - Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes, Wooded Open Farmland

2.2.4 An open rural landscape including a relatively high percentage cover of mature broad-leaved woodland. Land between woodlands and copses is mostly laid to intensive arable production with few hedgerows or trees.

Biii - Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes, Flat Open Farmland

2.2.5 Level, low-lying arable landscape with scattered tree and hedgerow cover providing local shelter and enclosure. Fields are large and regular, often rectilinear. Settlement is frequent in this landscape but tends to be in the form of dispersed farmsteads with large outbuildings. Villages are nucleated and tend to be well separated.

Biv - Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes, Sloping Farmland

2.2.6 An attractive, expansive and elevated arable landscape set in gently sloping terrain. Long views across the land and over low-lying land are an important characteristic, setting this type apart from other open farmland types. Fields are large and regular, bounded by clipped hedgerows and occasional woodland blocks. Villages tend to be mature and follow a nucleated pattern, often dispersed along a spring-line supplying groundwater from higher farmland. Proximity to the adjacent 'Wolds' landscapes is important resulting in partially enclosed views.

Summary of Landscape Assessment

Ci - Lincolnshire Wolds, High Farmland

2.2.7 An elevated and expansive arable landscape of large, gently rolling fields. These very large regular fields are generally bounded by well-maintained hedgerows with few trees, although at times hedges are absent or gappy. Tree cover is limited to regular woodland blocks which, although not covering an extensive area, play an important compositional role in scale with the overall landscape. Roads traverse the area in a regular pattern, usually with widened verges. Villages are mostly absent or peripheral to the area, with built forms mostly comprising large farmsteads, commonly built of brick. The shallow soils result in the visible presence of chalk in the soil, especially where recently ploughed.

Change in the Landscape

Change in the Landscape

- 3.0.1** The landscape of North East Lincolnshire has evolved over many centuries as a result of man's use of the land, the rivers and the sea. The inherent diversity of landscape types has been eroded during the last century by built development obscuring the landscape and by agricultural improvement which has blurred underlying distinctions between landscape types in a drive for high yields from the soil.
- 3.0.2** A healthy sustainable landscape, like a human community, is dynamic. Change is inevitable and need not be deleterious. In considering the landscape of the next hundred years, the emphasis must be on the appropriateness of changes and the balance between the needs of development and the needs of the environment.
- 3.0.3** The landscape guidelines proposed for each of the Landscape Character Areas seek to:
- Recognise and strengthen the inherent qualities of each landscape.
 - Recognise inherent diversity of landscape type.
 - Recognise the existing value placed on different landscapes, e.g. by the planning system.
 - Recognise the activities likely to bring pressure on the landscape.
- 3.0.4** Landscape change can occur in three ways:
- 3.0.5** **Loss** of features that provide colour, interest, shape and scale, e.g. loss of hedgerows by field enlargement, loss of views, replacement of traditional agricultural by modern 'off the peg' sheds, infill of open space within rural villages.
- 3.0.6** **Introduction** of new features. Such change is inevitable and can have either a positive, negative or neutral effect on the landscape. Features that might be introduced into the landscape are new housing, windfarms, transmission lines, quarries, roads, new woodlands, etc.
- 3.0.7** **Decline** in quality or state of repair of features of the landscape, e.g. dereliction of the urban fringe, neglect of hedgerows, loss of a smooth rolling topography due to scrub invasion, introduction of standardised suburban styles to a previously architecturally diverse settlement.
- 3.0.8** The 20th Century was extraordinary in terms of the magnitude and pace of change in North East Lincolnshire, although many of the forces of such change had their roots in the Industrial Revolution of the 19th Century. Technology and trade have brought many undeniable improvements in the quality of life. With such improvements, however, has come a move to standardised solutions for building, agriculture and communications which tend to ignore, rather than reflect, the landscape character of places and the differing ecosystems of the area. Development has tended to introduce change and loss of features which have

Change in the Landscape

important implications for the landscape of North East Lincolnshire. The main pressures which could influence the landscape during the next decades are as follows.

Historic Environment

3.0.9 At the time of writing a project is underway to carry out an Historic Landscape Characterisation study for the whole of Lincolnshire (by Lincolnshire County Council) A pilot study is already complete and it attempts to map modern land use in terms of the survival or legibility of the historic processes that have created it. It is not an attempt to define the landscape in terms of its value but is rather a judgement -free analysis of our surroundings. When completed this will become a useful planning tool. By being able to better analyse historic patterns in the landscape, consideration can be given to possibly re-creating lost hedgerows and field boundaries and other features which could strengthen the visual landscape character.

Agricultural Practices

3.0.10 Agricultural practices have reflected changed markets and the effects of Common Agricultural Policy subsidies. New and different crops continually emerge and it is impractical to consider proscribing any crop on landscape grounds. Recent shifts in European and UK policy are placing greater emphasis on agri-environment measures whereby farmers are encouraged to turn proportions of their land over to non-arable or set-aside uses. These usually have wildlife benefits and often have landscape benefits for the area of the farm in which they are implemented. However, it is possible for farmers to continue farming the balance of their holding on intensive lines, without neglecting watercourses, hedges, trees, hedgerow trees and other important landscape features. Increased agricultural demand for water, coupled with predictions of climate warming, will place greater demands on rivers and aquifers. Although partly regulated by abstraction consents, decline in groundwater may lead to loss of wet grassland, floodmeadows and ecologically valuable vegetation. A reaction to this decline, in the form of farm reservoir construction, may have visual implications. Farm diversification may lead to greater use of farmland for leisure and tourism. Whilst diversification will be essential for maintenance of a thriving rural economy, siting of new buildings, car parks or signs can have visual impacts.

3.0.11 A summary of the landscape issues associated with changing agricultural practices are:

- Potential loss or degradation of landscape features of local importance;
- Protection from the effects of drainage and groundwater decline on watercourses, wetlands and flood-meadows;

Change in the Landscape

- Potential restoration of landscape features of local importance where these have become degraded or lost;
- Risk of damage to, or loss of, sites of archaeological value.

Urban and Village Growth

3.0.12 Recent projections of national demands for new housing take into account the changing nature of society and the increased number of single people. This demand will inevitably place pressure on the urban fringe, on existing villages and may also be accommodated by construction of new settlements. Growth accommodated in villages may be to the benefit of small village communities on the margins of economic viability but the landscape impact, felt at a local level, will often be controversial. In accommodating growth of settlements a number of landscape issues arise:

- Whether growth should be by infill of open spaces within settlements or by expansion;
- Where infill is appropriate, protection of trees, walls, historic buildings, ponds and other features of potential landscape value should be a priority;
- Where expansion is appropriate, consideration of how the new edge of settlement will appear. This can often be harsh where inadequate landscape treatment is provided;
- Choice of building materials, detailing and design methods;
- Consideration of scale, siting and relationship with neighbouring property.
- The need to protect and enhance the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB

3.0.13 Refer also to Page 110 of NELC Urban Design Framework (Design North East Lincolnshire - Places and spaces renaissance. March 2008)

New Housing in the Countryside

3.0.14 Although present planning policies strictly limit the scope for new housing in open countryside, there will always be some demand for re-use of old farm buildings, construction of dwellings for agricultural workers/retired farmers and new dwellings, sometimes of an innovative nature, e.g. buried 'earth-shelters'. Key landscape issues to consider are:

- Relationship of the proposed new housing to the landform. Skyline locations are usually very visually intrusive;
- Choice of building materials, detailing and design methods;
- Boundary treatments should be integrated into the local character by means of an indented boundary line for example or by having a planted buffer.
- Relationship between outdoor spaces, fencing, walling, garages, outbuildings and access, and potential conflict with each other or with local character.

Change in the Landscape

- The need to protect and enhance the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB
- The need to control light pollution.

Roads and Access to the Countryside

3.0.15 Highway standards in terms of minimum curves, visibility, safety barriers, surfacing and signage have brought a welcome reduction in accidents and journey times. Yet the use of standardised solutions in highway design has often eroded the rural character of many roads (exemplified by hedges, ditches, verges, and trees) and has opened up quiet areas to noise and disturbance.

3.0.16 The visual impact of roads and traffic can be significant in open, elevated or low-lying landscapes. Although immediate pressure for major new road building has lessened due to government financial stringencies, there will remain a programme of minor improvements carried out by the Highway Authority. Some existing roads, such as parts of the A180, are not well integrated into the landscape and there may be scope for landscape schemes to reduce present visual impact. Tree planting along railway lines and roads can make them less visually intrusive.

3.0.17 With increased mobility and leisure expectations will come increased demand for access to the countryside for informal recreation. This usually involves parking the car before walking/cycling, etc., but some leisure activities are based on motorised access to the countryside.

3.0.18 Factors to consider in providing improvements to the road network are:

- The need for a strategic overview of need, alternatives and environmental assessment in major and moderate scale road schemes;
- The careful use of colours, materials and designs in road 'furniture' and landscape treatment; attention to restoration of roadside landscapes following improvements;
- Selection of optimum routes, lay-bys, car parks, should include consideration of, and take opportunities to highlight, local landscape character;
- The need to monitor, plan for and zone (if necessary) off-road motorised leisure such as scrambling, 4WD pursuits, etc.
- The need to protect and enhance the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB
- The need to control light pollution.

Tourism and Recreation

3.0.19 Tourism is the third largest industry in Great Britain and is important at a national level, in terms of foreign exchange earnings, and at a local level in terms of employment. The North East Lincolnshire coast is promoted for its character and its beaches, such as at Cleethorpes. Areas such as the Lincolnshire Wolds are used by local people for days out and are increasingly being marketed as national

Change in the Landscape

holiday destinations. Whilst tourism is not a major industry in much of the Borough, there is considerable visitor pressure on certain sites. Landscape issues should be considered as part of a strategic approach in provision for tourists and visitors. Key landscape issues to consider are:

- Where built development is considered, the location and design of facilities should address the issues relevant to new houses and village expansion. Poor siting and design can lead to intrusion, particularly for areas such as caravan sites where it is difficult to control colours of vans;
- Signing of attractions can lead to clutter and confusion in the landscape.
- Boundary treatments should be sympathetic to the local character.
- Light pollution can have an urbanising effect on the night time character.
- The need to protect and enhance the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB

Forestry, Trees and Woodlands

3.0.20 Woodland represents only 3% of the landcover of the former County of Humberside, as compared with a national average of over 10%. When it is recognised that this figure includes the large pine woods east of Scunthorpe, the relative openness of most of the areas landscape becomes more evident. Most landscape types could comfortably absorb many more trees and woodlands, with the exception of those most dependent on openness in the definition of their character, such as Wolds High Farmland.

3.0.21 Creation of new woodlands usually brings new opportunities for paths and management or creation of other habitats as a subsidiary requirement of grant aid. Environmental guidelines produced by the Forestry Commission seek to ensure that new woodlands bring social and environmental benefits. These guidelines need to be tailored to individual sites. The landscape guidelines formulated for each Regional Character Area and each Local Landscape Type identify some of the key considerations in woodland design that should be considered alongside the Forestry Commission guidelines.

3.0.22 The use of native species in new woodland can bring ecological benefits, but it should also be recognised that exotic and naturalised species have made a very significant contribution to local landscape character, e.g. the beech/sycamore woods of the Wolds or the Lombardy Poplars of lowland farms. Key landscape issues to consider are:

- Consideration of local diversity in species choice;
- The need for management of visually or ecologically important woodland when present financial incentives are so limited.

Change in the Landscape

Communications, Infrastructure, Power Generation and Transmission

3.0.23 North East Lincolnshire and its environs have a number of power stations with extensive transmission cabling. Power lines are usually intrusive but the effects can be reduced by careful siting and strategic consideration of alternative alignments or rationalisation of existing pylons. The use of underground cabling tends to be restricted to urban areas and is prohibitively expensive in all but the most sensitive rural locations. The Holford Rules seek to minimise visual intrusion by routing cabling away from settlements, roads and areas of high landscape value. However, professional landscape advice is essential. Particular attention needs to be given to the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB which is an internationally important landscape.

3.0.24 The use of renewable energy technology locally can theoretically lead to a reduction in the need for power lines etc

3.0.25 Another technical development is the increasing feasibility of wind power generation along the North Sea/River Humber coast and on high ground inland. Although wind farms are innovative means of generating 'clean' electricity, by their nature they tend to be sited in areas of high visibility and often high landscape value. Planning Authorities have an important role to play in the development of wind power, but must balance the requirement for prominent sites with the need to protect landscape quality. Other issues to consider are ecology, noise and secondary effects, e.g. new transmission cabling and access roads. There are a number of landscape principles which should be brought to bear on the selection of sites for wind power generation and overhead cabling. Important issues are:

- Consideration of the design of the structures themselves and the number and layout within each group of structures;
- Consideration of using smaller turbines (but more of them) as opposed to the use of the largest technically possible which is the norm.
- Consideration of local landscape type and its potential to accommodate large vertical structures;
- The impact of skyline development and potential use of "background" vegetation or ridges;
- Consideration of the zone of visual influence and the possibility of landscape mitigation and integration by off-site planting;
- Particular attention needs to be given to Landscapes of high value such as the Lincolnshire Wolds.
- The need for strategic environmental assessment and the use of professional landscape advice.

Change in the Landscape

Quarrying and Extraction of Aggregates

3.0.26 Whilst there has been a limited amount of mineral extraction within the Borough in the past, there are currently no active or dormant sites with planning permission. Selection of any new sites is subject to environmental assessment and any permission would take into account plans for impact mitigation and site restoration. Key landscape issues are:

- Maintenance of high standards of environmental assessment, taking into account all aspects, particularly hydrology and archaeology, and overall scale of development in the landscape;
- Effects of restoration proposals on local landscape character in terms of landform, species choice, habitat creation, etc.

Large Buildings in or on the Edge of Countryside

3.0.27 The nature of the area's agricultural and industrial economy means that large buildings are frequent and often visible, e.g. agricultural stores, silos, industrial units, power stations, petro-chemical installations. In most instances it is not possible to screen or hide such buildings and instead, where feasible, attention should be given to the choice of materials, quality of design, scale in the landscape and boundary treatment (within reasonable cost constraints). Key landscape issues are:

- Siting of large buildings in terms of visual impact by consideration of landform, landcover, opportunities for background landscaping;
- Particular attention needs to be given to Landscapes of high value such as the Lincolnshire Wolds.
- Potential for use of appropriate natural materials and colours;
- Potential for sensitive use of modern materials such as profile metal sheeting.
- Green technologies, such as green roofs/walls, can also be employed to reduce visual impact (as well as other benefits such as water attenuation and increased bio-diversity)

Coastal Processes and Management

3.0.28 The coastline of North East Lincolnshire, being on a tidal estuary, is subject to processes of erosion and deposition, some of which are reduced by past construction of sea defences. These processes form part of a wider sphere of natural influence and activity stretching beyond the Borough boundary. The estuary is recognised as being of international importance for birds and the coast is also valuable for leisure and forms of family-orientated tourism. The coast and estuary also support many industries which are critical to the local and regional economy. The complexity of coastal processes, the commitment to coastal defences and the

Change in the Landscape

future planning status of the coastline are all issues to be considered in the future. Whilst most estuary planning issues will be affected by sea defence, property value and ecological issues, there are some landscape principles which are relevant:

- Potential for landscape qualities to be recognised in strategic management planning;
- Potential to conserve undeveloped coastline by restricting developments to those dependent on a coastal location;
- Potential for guidelines set out for new development and town/village expansion being applied to the location and landscape treatment of coastal development.

Possible Further Studies

3.0.29 It is recommended that further studies should be undertaken to look in more detail at each of the Landscape Character Areas in the district and assess their individual sensitivity to a range of development types : housing; industrial; telecommunications; windfarms etc. Such an approach has been taken by East Riding Council. This could be a very useful tool in guiding development control decisions.

3.0.30 To assist the incorporation of new development into the local landscape, and to reduce overall impact and visual impacts, it would be useful to have more clarity about what such mitigation measures might be. They could usefully be set out in much more detail, in Design Guides, which would provide useful guidance for developers.

Change in the Landscape

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

(Landscape Character Area A Humber Estuary)

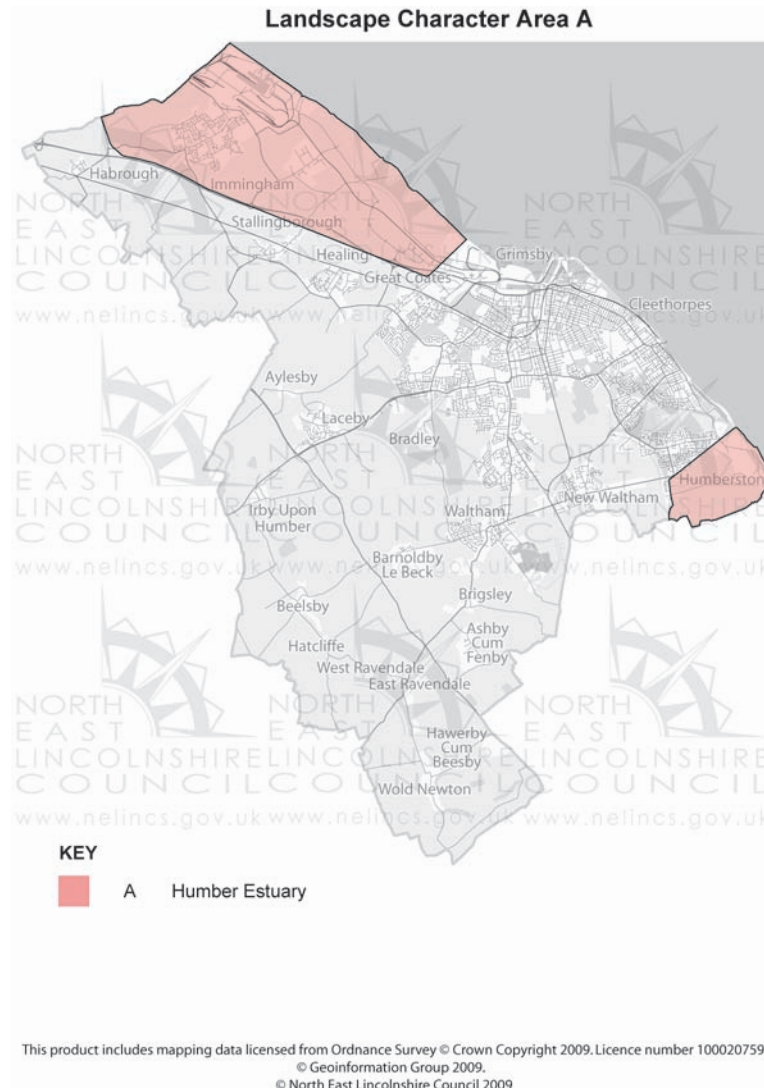


Figure 4.1 Landscape Character Area A Humber Estuary

4.1 The Humber Estuary Landscape Character

Introduction

- 4.1.1** The estuary of the Humber is one of the largest in the country, draining approximately one-fifth of the area of England, and has a maximum width of approximately 14kilometres at its mouth. Despite this size its visual presence is remarkably slight due, in part, to the low-lying nature of the surrounding land and the visual obstruction from flood alleviation structures which are present along much

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

of its course. Views of the estuary are provided from high ground such as the Lincolnshire Wolds, from paths along the flood defences and from towns such as Cleethorpes.

- 4.1.2** The landscape surrounding the estuary mainly comprises extremely level and low-lying farmland and industrial complexes. Large unbounded arable fields on fertile well-drained soils are characteristic. Hedgerow and tree cover is limited, although occasional dense mature woodland blocks break up views and are visually prominent.
- 4.1.3** The estuary itself is an area of great nature conservation value which has been recognised by a range of national and international designations. These include a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); a Ramsar site which classifies the estuary as a 'Wetland of International Importance'; and a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. The estuary has recently been designated as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) under the EC Habitats Directive. Such areas are recognised for their habitat types and/or species which are rare or threatened within a European context.

Physical Influences

- 4.1.4** The Humber Estuary is a recent geomorphological feature; its present form has been created since the last Ice Age by processes that occurred during the late Quaternary Period. At its maximum the ice advanced along the eastern edge of the Wolds plugging the mouth of the estuary and impounding a large lake over the Vale of York and the Goole and Crowle lowlands. In the post-glacial period this lake, now unplugged, discharged eastward, through a gap approximately at the position of the Humber Bridge, across the muddy boulder clay wastes. It formed a deep channel with a wide shallow valley flowing out into the North Sea which at this time was dry. As sea level rose, the wide valley became flooded and the estuary slowly developed, so that around 6000 years ago the estuary's current form was largely established.
- 4.1.5** Many of the poorly drained alluvial soils around the estuary are now of high agricultural value. This is largely due to the extensive drainage improvements carried out over the past few centuries, including the cutting of new drainage channels, enlarging and diverting of existing watercourses, construction of flood alleviation berms, sluices and installation of pumps. Soils of the area were also extensively modified from the mid-18th Century onwards by the practice of warping – i.e. the seasonal impoundment of tidal silts. This practice owed much to the influence of Dutch engineers. Warping increased the fertility of the land such that most of the land close to the estuary is now of Grade 1 and 2 status and is used for arable, root crop and market garden production. Although warping is no longer practised, the drains remain useful for land drainage and are still locally prominent by virtue of their raised grass flood defence embankments. It has been estimated

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

that around 78% of the estuary's original salt marsh has been converted to agricultural production in recent centuries, although a substantial area has been preserved. In addition, over 5000 hectares of intertidal wetland has been reclaimed.

- 4.1.6** The hydrological dynamics of the Humber Estuary are immensely complex and its future development very difficult to predict, depending as it does to a large extent on relative sea level changes that may occur. It is likely, if present predictions of global warming and its consequences prove correct, that the estuary and its environs may be about to undergo a major transformation. Many commentators raise concerns about the age and condition of many of the estuary's flood defences. Their deteriorating condition, combined with anticipated sea level rise, is increasing the potential for overlapping and flooding. Current management plans for the estuary seek ways to reconcile these threats through policies such as managed realignment. These are regarded as soft engineering coastal defence techniques and may include sustainable flood defence by recreating eroded saltmarsh and mudflat habitat. The Humber is a pioneering estuary in this regard. The long term issues of flood defences around the estuary is being addressed under the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Management Strategy 2008. In N E Lincolnshire the strategy contains plans to improve the defences as necessary (at the time of writing "managed alignment" is not an option for the district so therefore no dramatic changes to the landscape are anticipated)

Human Influences

- 4.1.7** The Humber Estuary has provided both a resource for settlement and industry and a means of communication and trade for several thousand years. This fact is reflected in the presence through the whole estuary area of approximately 19 scheduled archaeological sites and monuments. Tidal erosion has exposed archaeological finds suggesting considerable human activity during prehistoric times. Of these by far the most important are the few Bronze Age boats and several log boats that have been discovered on the Humber foreshore, the most important at North Ferriby, on the north bank of the estuary. These boats have contributed much to the knowledge of early boat building in north west Europe. Additional archaeological and palaeoecological evidence suggests that early settlement clustered around the higher land above the estuary. These elevated and drier positions allowed exploitation of the low-lying surrounds and with gradual clearance of the woodlands allowed the development of pastoral and small-scale agriculture. By the late Iron Age a major settlement had developed at South Ferriby.
- 4.1.8** The Humber was a northern frontier of the Roman Empire for some twenty years (AD 50 to 70) before a northward push was made. This led to the development of Ermine Street(now the B1207) which carried trade to the ferry at Winteringham. New Romano-British settlements grew up along the Humber taking advantage of the new trading routes. By the 3rd and 4th Centuries the area was densely populated

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

and wealthy. The Humber continued to play an important role in the development of trade and commerce throughout the medieval period and contributed to the growth and prosperity of a number of market towns.

- 4.1.9** The 16th and 17th Centuries saw the fortunes of many of the market towns begin to fluctuate. The reasons for this included a decline in water borne trade, competition between market centres, localised famines or epidemics and improved land based transport and communications. Selective urban growth continued during the 17th Century often favouring those towns with access to water communications. Through this period Hull prospered and developed as the estuary's principal port and settlement.
- 4.1.10** In the 18th Century, widespread enclosure and improvements in farming methods significantly increased agricultural productivity in the region. Extensive drainage improvements and warping brought most of the soils to Grade 1 and 2 status and the area prospered. Similar to other areas in the vicinity many buildings are constructed from locally produced red brick and pantile materials. Proximity to the coast also results in the distinctive use of cobble and brick-cobble materials. In a more local context, concrete sea defences, former military installations and lighthouses combine to create a coastal vernacular.
- 4.1.11** Erosion of the older patterns of urban development began in the 20th Century with the spread of industry and the establishment of the port, oil storage and chemical industries at Immingham and along the 'south bank'.

Ecological Influences

- 4.1.12** The Humber Estuary is well known for its nature conservation value. Practically all of the inter-tidal mudflats are designated as part of the Special Protection Area on the basis of their European value for birds. Although the estuary edge supports much industry and urban development, and receives high inputs of agricultural chemicals by way of its feeder rivers, nevertheless the extent of mud and the volume of through-flow mean that a rich invertebrate fauna can still be supported.
- 4.1.13** Above the high water mark most land is of lesser conservation value, having been subject to extensive industrial or agricultural improvement. Within these areas, however, many features of local ecological importance persist. Such features include relict lines of saltmarsh and reedbed vegetation along tidal channels, marshy grassland and water-filled clay pits (more significantly around Barton in North Lincolnshire). Left over from the brick industry these pits support open water, reedbed, scrub and grassland and are of ornithological value.
- 4.1.14** Agricultural land within the LCA is a secondary habitat for wintering waders and waterfowl, offering winter feed and high tide roosting.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Visual Characteristics of the Landscape

4.1.15 The Humber Estuary is an expansive, flat and low-lying landscape in which agriculture, industrial/urban and semi-natural habitat land uses combine to provide local variety in an otherwise simple, sometimes bleak landscape. The estuary itself can sometimes present a somewhat sombre appearance, particularly at low tide when extensive areas of mudflat are exposed. In contrast, at high tide the estuary has a brighter, more attractive coastal feel. The dynamics of tides, changing weather, bird life and visible activity on the estuary sometimes combine to create a vibrant scene. However, in many areas views of the water are blocked by flood alleviation berms and the estuary's presence is perceived only through the more subtle influences such as the taste and smell of salt-laden air.

4.1.16 Two local land-based landscape types have been identified within the North East Lincolnshire section of the Humber Estuary. For the purposes of this assessment the marine environment, though visually important, has been excluded.

Ai - Industrial Landscape. This visually intrusive area stretches from the north-west of Grimsby up to and around Immingham. It is dominated by on-shore oil and gas refineries and other large scale industrial units and extends inland to the A180(T).

Aii - Flat Open Farmland. This Local Landscape Type lies to the south-east of Cleethorpes and Humberston, at the outer limit of the estuary.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

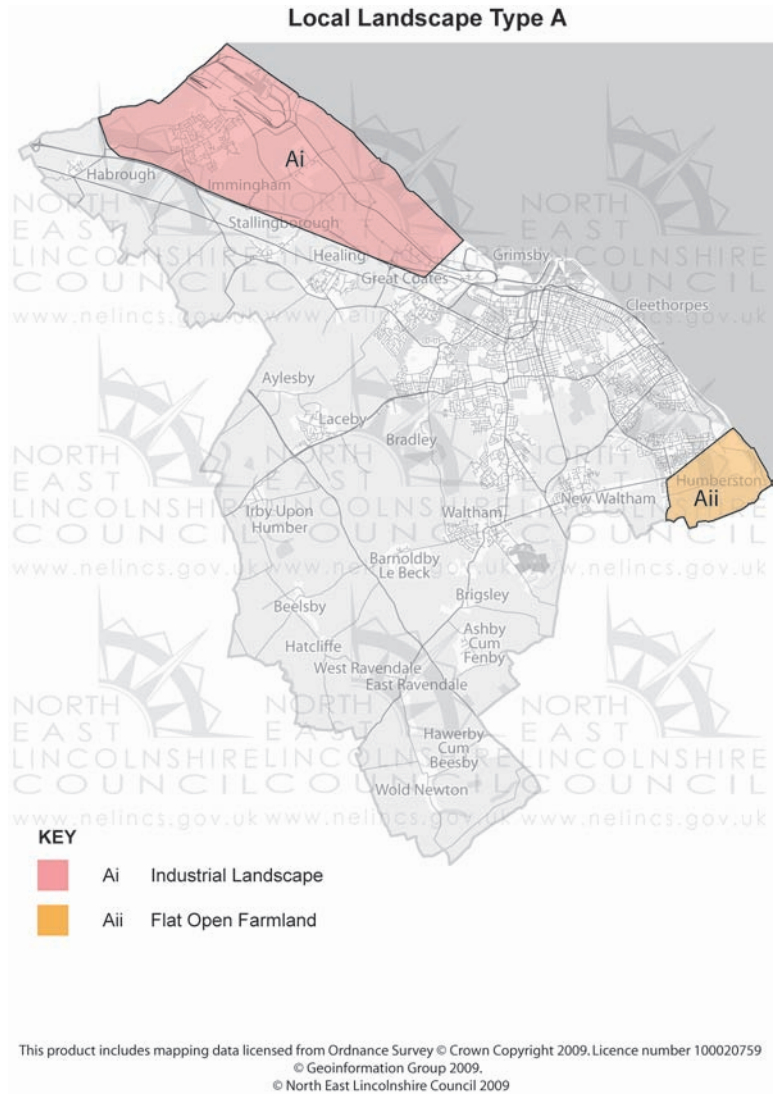


Figure 4.2 Local Landscape Type A

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

4.2 Humber Estuary Landscape Character Area Guidelines

Introduction

4.2.1 The following guidance covers issues relevant to the Humber Estuary Landscape Character Area.

4.2.2 The issues addressed are:

- Settlements and Buildings
- Infrastructure
- Land Management
- Field Boundaries
- Trees and Woodland

Landscape Strategy

4.2.3 The landscape character of the Humber Estuary LCA is difficult to summarise. The visual representation of the estuarine corridor is sometimes clearly defined but often less obvious. Openness, flatness and uniformity dominate for the most part the appearance of the landscape. The agricultural landscape has few distracting features to draw the eye, and where present these are often unattractive, i.e. pylons or refineries. Broad landscape strategies should be designed to enhance the landscape through restoration. In many circumstances these strategies should be designed to mitigate specific visual impacts.

Settlements and Buildings

Description 1

The Humber Estuary has great strategic importance, linking the UK to the major growth regions of mainland Europe. The large amounts of flat land adjacent to the estuary are attractive to developers with a genuine need for an estuarine location. Much of the land identified for potential “estuary-related employment” lies on the south bank of the river between Grimsby and Immingham.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Aim

It is important that development proposals seek to safeguard the environmental qualities of their setting. Foreshore and inshore areas are vulnerable to many environmental impacts and it is essential that, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999, mandatory and rigorous environmental assessments continue to be undertaken prior to applications for planning permission. Development that might affect the internationally important biodiversity designations of the Humber Estuary will require a Habitats Regulations Assessment under the Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994.

LCA Guideline 1

Seek to ensure all proposed developments should be assessed and where required, a thorough and rigorous environmental assessments should accompany development applications and where applicable Habitats Regulations Assessments.

Description 2

The “Estuary-related Industry Area” is dominated by large scale developments, such as oil refineries, ports, cargo-handling and power generation facilities. Such industries are visually intrusive, particularly during the day, over vast inland and off-shore areas.

Aim

Landscape mitigation measures should be a pre-requisite of planning approval and existing land owners should be encouraged to improve their local environments. There is often limited opportunity to mitigate wider impacts and so efforts should be concentrated at a more local level. An effective mechanism to enable this is through boundary improvements. Measures such as re-appraisal of security fencing; peripheral planting; hedgerow renewal and site entrance landscaping can be locally effective. It is important to identify local patterns when it comes to any planting. As always, any new planting especially woodland, should seek to reflect the scale and pattern of the local landscape

LCA Guideline 2

Seek to encourage active businesses to improve their local landscape setting.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Aim

character. It should be noted that carefully sited blocks of broad leaved woodland can be more effective in breaking up the outlines of large buildings or structures rather than long lines of planting.

The use of native species will also increase the bio-diversity of an area.

LCA Guideline 2

Description 3

Many of the large-scale developments along the estuary fringe are operated by large corporations or multi-national companies. They should be encouraged to undertake 'environmental audits'.

Aim

Environmental audits are systematic examinations of the interaction between business operations and the surroundings. These include an appraisal of all emissions to air, land and water; legal constraints; the effects on neighbouring communities; landscape and ecology; and the public's perception of the operating company in the local area. Such audits can provide a mechanism by which companies target environmental improvement measures.

LCA Guideline 3

Seek to encourage existing businesses to prepare 'Environmental Audits'.

Description 4

Villages close to the estuary are generally absent. The low-lying land is under continual threat of flooding and this has inhibited significant growth of rural settlements. However, the boundary of the estuarine Landscape Character Area is often marked by villages exploiting the more elevated, drier land.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Aim

The nature and appearance of villages, where present, are important. Pressures for new housing should be accommodated through limited village expansion and localised infill. It is important that the characteristic nuclear arrangement of rural settlements is maintained, thus limiting the further encroachment of built structures into the countryside.

LCA Guideline 4

Seek to ensure that village expansion is undertaken in an appropriate manner sympathetic to the character of each settlement.

Description 5

Older built structures in the vicinity of the Humber often are constructed from soft red brick and red pantiles.

Aim

In the design of new buildings local vernacular should be respected.

LCA Guideline 5

Seek to utilise locally arising materials in any new building as appropriate to the site and form of any development.

Description 6

Farmsteads are commonly associated with large-scale sheds, barns and other related modern farm buildings. Often these appear intrusive and act to dilute the character of traditional farm complexes.

Aim

Changes of use, modifications in layout or the introduction of new farm buildings should be sensitively designed. The re-use of existing redundant farm buildings is generally preferential to the creation of new buildings. Where modern

LCA Guideline 6

Seek to mitigate the impact of any new large-scale farm buildings.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Aim

demands for agri-industrial scale buildings necessitate the construction of new large structures, these should preferably be shielded by existing mature shelterbelts, built close to existing buildings and designed to a scale, and detail complementary to existing buildings.

LCA Guideline 6

Infrastructure

Description 7

Due to the intensity of large-scale developments along the Humber Bank, the area is traversed by a variety of roads, railways and transmission power lines. These elements combine with the prominent industrial developments to degrade the overall rural setting of the landscape and contribute to the impression of urban/industrial scenery in many places.

Aim

Landscape mitigation measures should be considered to aid the assimilation of many of these infrastructure elements into their local, and wherever possible their wider-scale, settings. As always, any new planting especially woodland, should seek to reflect the scale and pattern of the local landscape character. Native species increase bio-diversity and planting along roads and railway lines can make them less visually intrusive.

LCA Guideline 7

Seek to initiate landscape mitigation measures around intrusive infrastructure elements.

Description 8

Some areas of scenery near the estuary are isolated. Access, although not prohibited, is difficult with many lanes leading “nowhere”. This sense of isolation and the straight nature of the lanes’ network is important and locally distinctive.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Aim

Improvements to lanes across the district should take care not to erode their desolate nature or regularity. At the same time access to foot paths should be improved to provide more recreational opportunities.

LCA Guideline 8

Seek to ensure that the traditional character of lanes is not lost in any improvements.

Seek to increase recreational use of the area and better access to footpaths along the Humber bank.

Management

Description 9

Agricultural production across much of the estuarine farmland is high. Most of the land is classed as Grades 1 and 2 and the high yields are maintained through a complex hierarchy of pumped drainage developed over many years. The management results in the creation of a landscape in which drains, dykes and channelled watercourses are common and in which trees, hedgerows and woodlands are relatively scarce. The scenery is simple, uniform and relatively featureless. Vertical elements such as pylons, buildings, trees and industrial complexes have an enhanced visual presence.

Aim

Visually, the infrastructure of the farmed landscape – hedgerows, hedgerow trees, woodlands and traditional farm buildings – has been possibly diluted to some extent by the requirements of intensive land drainage. Wherever possible, incentives should be promoted as a mechanism to enable the localised re-introduction of trees, hedgerows and woodlands. Care needs to be taken with any new planting associated with watercourses and the resulting shade can have a negative effect on aquatic vegetation. Better opportunities may exist on the boundaries that do not include an associated watercourse. Such incentives should be specifically targeted to offer a mitigation role offering scope to screen intrusive

LCA Guideline 9

Seek to re-introduce traditional landscape features such as hedges, trees and woodland blocks as appropriate to the local pattern.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Aim

landscape features such as large scale farm buildings, roads, railways and, where appropriate, industrial complexes.

LCA Guideline 9

Description 10

The conditions required for repeated cropping can only be maintained by operating pumped drainage. This creates a varied aquatic environment in watercourses; some ditches are relatively still, others free running. The waterside vegetation goes through a cyclical change as a result of regular maintenance, from open water to dense plant growth and back to open water. This, allied to the requirement of an artificially lowered water table, offers little opportunity for effective habitat development.

Aim

In consultation with land managers, the EA, DEFRA and relevant Internal Drainage Boards, the watercourses should be locally modified to enhance their visual and ecological importance. This could be achieved by allowing localised tree and shrub development and, where possible, re-modelling to create more varied aquatic and marginal ecosystems.

LCA Guideline 10

Seek to encourage the visual and ecological enhancement of watercourses.

Description 11

The necessity to maintain a lowered water table results in unstable water conditions, a situation unfavourable for the development of species-rich aquatic and emergent ecosystems. This situation is exacerbated by the requirements, during drought, of crop spraying.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Aim

Incentives to utilise more drought-resistant crops could reduce likely stresses on the ground water.

LCA Guideline 11

Encourage the use of drought-resistant crops.

Description 12

The requirements to maintain a lowered water table, whilst beneficial for agricultural productivity, do not provide an environment beneficial to wildlife.

Aim

Increasingly through the UK 'Water Table Management Plans' are being developed. These are designed to reconcile the often conflicting interests of nature conservation, agriculture and flood defence. Usually prepared by the EA, DEFRA and IDB, these plans form the appropriate focus for consultation and co-operation and should be encouraged.

LCA Guideline 12

Encourage the production of water table management plans.

Description 13

The Humber Estuary is a complex hydrological phenomenon. It is a healthy estuary, the importance of which for nature conservation can be seen in the number and extent of its nature reserves (as well as for its employment potential). For some years, parts of the estuary have been designated as SSSI, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar sites. More recently those designations have been extended to cover the whole estuary. The estuary has recently been designated as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC). In recent years the rate of silt deposition in the estuary has reduced indicating that there is a reduction in the amount of sediment being supplied to the estuary. This will have serious implications in view of the predictions for sea level rise, as the mudflats and saltmarshes, already reduced in area by reclamation, will not be supplied with enough silt to combat the rate of rising water levels. It appears that land around the Humber Estuary is at increasing risk of flooding.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Aim

There has been, and continues to be undertaken, a wealth of research on hydrological processes in the Humber Estuary. Most experts are of the opinion that former land management activities relying on coastal defence and land drainage are no longer appropriate. A new style of coastal management may be required which involves a better understanding of coastal processes. Techniques which work with coastal processes rather than resisting them are most appropriate. In some instances this would entail land management systems of 'managed retreat'. The complexity of management issues relevant to such policies are beyond the scope of this study, but it is inevitable that managed retreat will influence future policy decisions in and around the estuary.

LCA Guideline 13

Seek to ensure that land management policies close to the estuary consider wider estuarine hydrological issues.

Field Boundaries

Description 14

As a protection against flooding, fields have been enlarged with the consequent loss of visual definition and structure. Today there are few hedgerows in the landscape. Where present the hedges are often in poor condition being discontinuous and commonly dying from the base which may be due to fluctuations in the water table.

Aim

Wherever present, hedgerows should be retained as important landscape features. In addition, management and replacement incentives should be encouraged to develop their presence in the scenery. Management should be encouraged that allows for hedges to grow taller and thicker rather than closely trimmed as is often the case. This would increase the visual presence of the hedges as well as increased bio-diversity. Cutting on a 3 year rather than a 1 year cycle could achieve this.

LCA Guideline 14

Seek to retain and supplement hedgerows.

Seek to modify the management of hedgerows to allow them to be taller and thicker.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Description 15

Hedgerows occasionally follow the line of drainage ditches. In these situations they offer enhanced ecological importance providing improved conditions for habitat development and wildlife dispersal.

Aim

Hedgerow renewal strategies should seek to prioritise these arrangements.

LCA Guideline 15

Encourage hedgerow planting along drainage ditches (but with care not to overshadow aquatic vegetation)

Trees and Woodlands

Description 16

Woodland blocks are few in number but where occurring are mostly regular in shape, medium sized (i.e. 3 to 7 hectares) and deciduous. These woodlands have an enhanced visual presence due to the landscape's flatness, openness of views and general lack of visual diversity.

Aim

The estuarine farmland could accommodate a marginally greater percentage of woodland cover. Woodland planting would reflect the scale, arrangement and composition of established woodlands. Where possible, new woods should seek a landscape mitigation role offering screening to landscape detractors such as large-scale farm buildings, roads, railways and industrial complexes. The use of native species will also increase bio-diversity

LCA Guideline 16

Encourage the planting of a limited number of new large scale woodlands.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Description 17

The existing woodlands are of a recent planted origin and many lack species, age or structural diversity.

Aim

To maximise the ecological importance of the existing woodlands and to ensure their long-term survival, management plans should seek to diversify the structure, species and age composition of woodlands by management techniques such as selective felling, re-stocking and coppice rotation. The design of felling coupes should avoid removal of woodland edges, in the short term, as this would have a marked visual impact on the landscape.

LCA Guideline 17

Encourage woodland management to diversify woodland age, species and structure.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

4.3 Humber Estuary Local Landscape Type

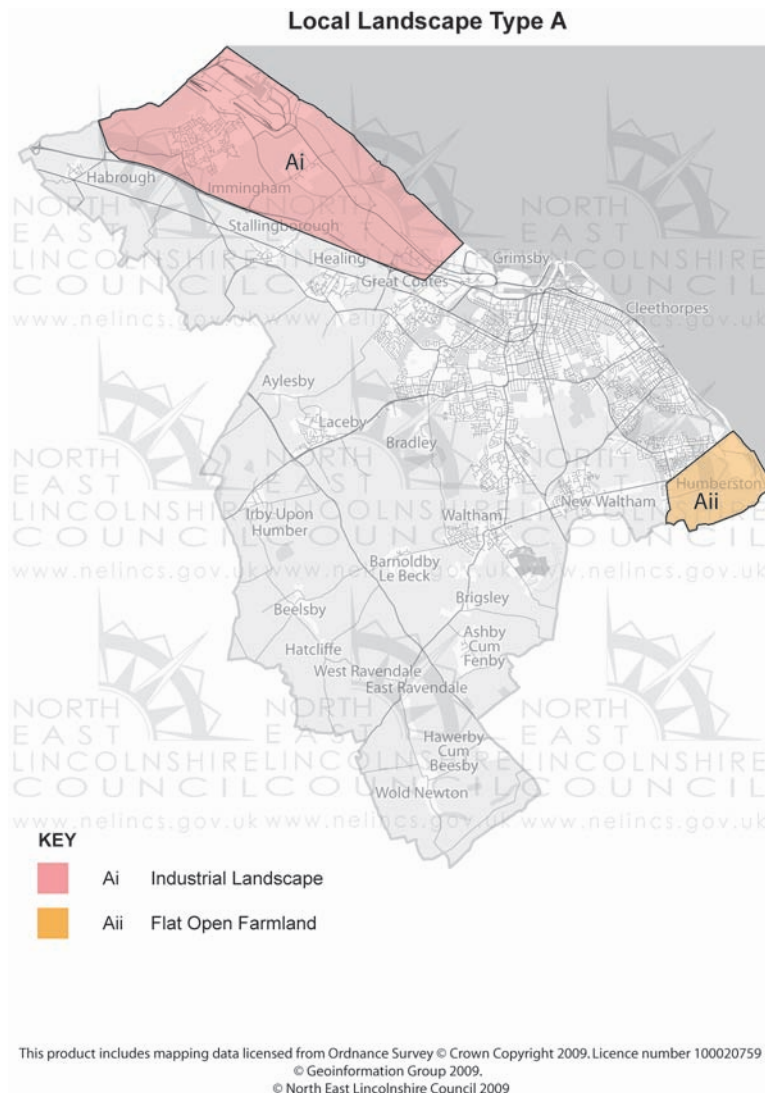


Figure 4.3 Local Landscape Types A

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Introduction

4.3.1 The following issues are specific to the Local Landscape Types for the Humber Estuary Landscape Character Area. The guidance is concerned with 'local' issues such as trees and woodlands, field boundaries and local management.

4.3.2 The following Local Landscape Types are considered:

Ai - Humber Estuary, Industrial Landscape

Aii - Humber Estuary, Flat Open Farmland

Ai - Industrial Landscape ('South Humber Bank', i.e. Immingham to Grimsby)

Local Issues

4.3.3 The dominance of pylons, industrial complexes and infrastructure elements in this area combine to significantly degrade the local, otherwise rural landscape structure. Many grants are now available to industries with the aim of bringing about significant environmental improvements. These could be to implement broad landscape strategies to restore landscape structure. (NB some of these points are already included in the main body of the text but are discussed here in more detail)

- Seek to implement landscape measures to improve the overall impression of the area. Due to the scale of industrial activity it would be impractical to expect to screen intrusive industry. Landscaping should be designed to soften the local scene rather than to screen industry in the wider landscape.
- Seek to soften security fences of industrial complexes by planting trees and shrubs (but without compromising the security of the site).
- Promote the protection of all existing woodlands, wetlands and primary hedges and that, where appropriate, they form the core to new landscape improvements.
- Screen planting should principally be mixed broad-leaf in composition. Where year-round screening is required, conifers can be used in mixes.
- Seek to maintain the present pattern of field boundaries and, where necessary, augment gappy or discontinuous hedge lines.
- Seek to increase the recreational use of the area. Access to footpath links along the Humber Bank in particular should be encouraged for walking, fishing, etc.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Aii - Flat Open Farmland (Humberston)

Local Issues

4.3.4 The flatter, drained nature of this landscape has led to a particularly intensive level of agriculture. The scenery is mostly open and broken up by a few woodlands. The paucity of conventional rural structure is the result of agricultural intensification and broad landscape strategies should therefore be of enhancement, seeking to encourage the introduction of more hedgerow trees and woodlands into the landscape. (NB some of these points are already included in the main body of the text but are discussed here in more detail)

- The relatively few existing woodland blocks have an important compositional role in the landscape, offering a level of visual containment and visual diversity. The retention of these woodlands is important.
- Many of the existing woodlands have a shelterbelt role and are generally geometric and of linear arrangement. This pattern emphasises their visual presence in the landscape. New shelterbelt planting of a similar style should be encouraged to increase the perception of woodland cover. Naturalistic blocks of woodland are always preferable to long belts of trees.
- The general condition and distribution of hedgerows in the landscape type is poor. Most hedges are closely trimmed, gappy or dying back at the base. Such hedges would benefit from management allowing them to grow taller and thicker. Hedgerow tree regeneration should also be encouraged. Hedge cutting on a three-yearly, rather than yearly cycle would be appropriate to increase visual representation and ecological diversity.
- The historic pattern of large hedged fields is being eroded through farm amalgamation and field enlargement. Although the flat topography does not readily allow the field patterns to register strongly, consideration should be given to re-creating lost hedgerows and field boundaries, particularly alongside roads, lanes, footpaths, bridleways, streams and along parish boundaries.
- Most ditches, dykes and watercourses have few associated trees, hedgerows or vegetation and contribute to the openness of the scenery. Opportunities should be investigated in consultation with the EA and IDB to increase the presence of streamside vegetation. Such a policy would offer both visual and ecological benefits.

Landscape Assessment: Humber Estuary

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

(Landscape Character Area B Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes)

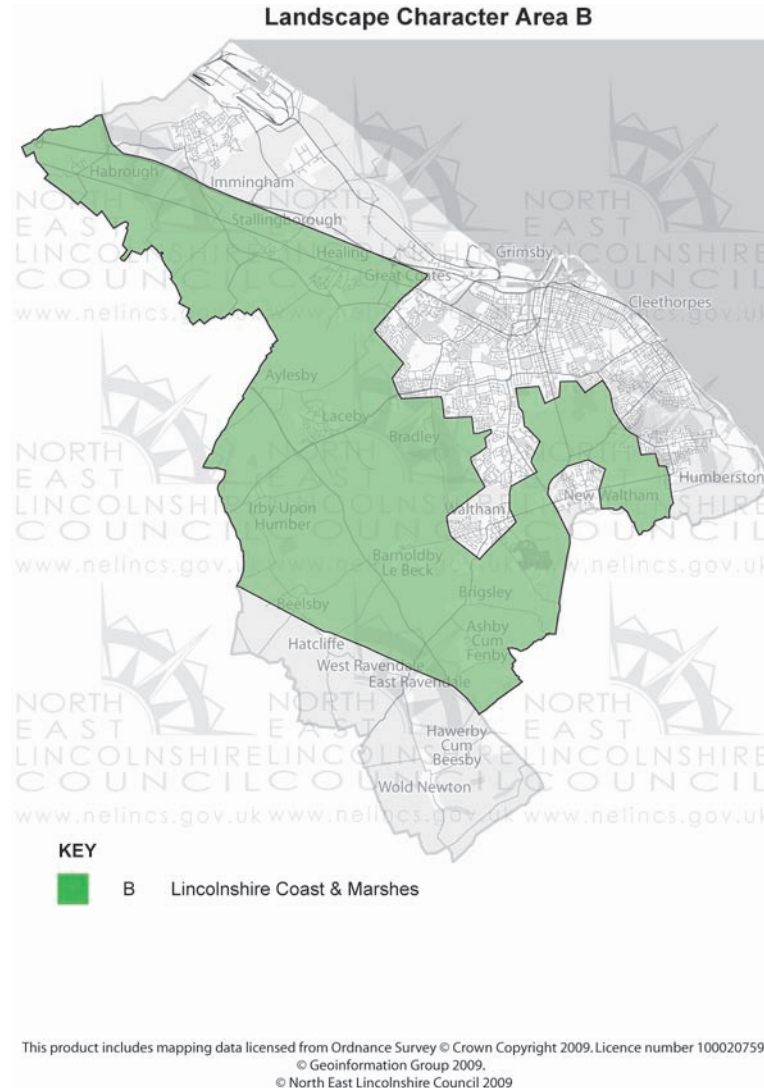


Figure 5.1 Landscape Character Area B Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

5.1 The Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes Landscape Character

Introduction

- 5.1.1** The Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes form a slightly undulating agricultural landscape flowing eastward off the Lincolnshire Wolds towards the mouth of the Humber Estuary and North Sea Coast. It typically ranges some 5 to 7kilometres in width extending north and westwards to Habrough, and south and eastwards to Ashby-cum-Fenby. Its westerly boundary lies against the Lincolnshire Wolds along a line approximately by the 60metre contour.
- 5.1.2** The scenery of the Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes is characterised by undulating farmland often including a number of large woodland blocks. The landscape is unexceptional, with views across to the urban/industrialised coast and estuary detracting from the overall scene.

Physical Influences

- 5.1.3** Although underlain by the Cretaceous Chalk deposits that dip eastward from their outcrop along the Lincolnshire Wolds, the parent material of this part of North East Lincolnshire is predominantly glacial boulder clay. Deposited by North Sea ice during the last glaciation, this till is in some places 20m thick. Unlike the similar-aged till deposits to the north of the Humber, the till here does not extend to the coast and consequently does not form sea cliffs.
- 5.1.4** Soils derived from the glacial till form extensive tracts of good generally fertile arable land, although the drainage is not always satisfactory and often impeded. The characteristic undulating topography frequently results in a pattern of better drained upper slopes and less well-drained depressions. Narrow strips of heavy, poorly drained clay, derived from alluvium, occupy many of the valleys which cut through the drift terrain. Most of these soils are of agricultural grades 2 and mostly 3. The disposition of arable and pasture land closely reflects these soil variations.

Human Influences

- 5.1.5** Patterns of human settlement through this LCA mirror those described for the Lincolnshire Wolds in the next section. The relatively elevated land lying above the coastal marshes proved attractive to early settlers. Here early settlements concentrated along the valleys which offered shelter and a reliable water source. Streams such as Waithe Beck were especially attractive and today still form the focus of village and farm settlement.
- 5.1.6** The western edge of the LCA abutting the Wolds lies at around the 50-60m contour line and is marked by a line of hamlets and farmsteads situated along the spring-line, mainly in the valleys. Other villages and hamlets through the area have a more

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

scattered arrangement. Like the other areas of the Wolds, the dip slopes have seen major, permanent settlement since Saxon times. Most villages have Saxon or Danish origins, although the particular density of villages ending in 'by' such as Thoresby, Utterby, Fotherby, Beelsby and Hawerby, would indicate that the Danish were the main settlers.

5.1.7 In recent historical times the coastal zone marking this LCA's eastern edge was in a general state of flux. The Iron Age coastline (2000 years BP) lay along a line approximated by the A1031 to the south of Cleethorpes, and the villages of Killingholme, Halton and Goxhill to the north. Palaeogeographic evidence suggests that a wide intertidal zone of brackish marshes and creeks existed. Anglo-Saxon and Danish settlers slowly drained this land and by the 11th Century much of it had been reclaimed for agricultural and pastoral purposes.

5.1.8 Through the medieval period and into the 18th Century the land was extensively used to fatten animals driven off the Wolds.

Ecological Influences

5.1.9 In common with most farmed landscapes derived from glacial deposits of boulder clay, gravels and sands, drainage and cultivation have led to losses of most grassland and woodland of interest. Nevertheless pockets of the natural woodland of slightly base-rich derivation remain. These are found in the form of certain mature hedges, streamside woodlands and the ground flora of replanted farm woodlands.

5.1.10 Typical canopy species include pedunculate oak, ash, alder with an understorey of hawthorn, hazel, field maple and wych elm, the last usually found as underwood suckering from cut stools or diseased elms. Indicator field layer species include dog's mercury, ramsons and enchanter's nightshade.

5.1.11 The Lincolnshire Drift is relatively less fertile than the majority of Humber region and, as a consequence, there is a higher proportion of hedges, unchanneled streams, permanent pasture and woodland than elsewhere in the former county. This provides a number of local wildlife refuges.

Visual Character of the Landscape

5.1.12 The Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes LCA is a transition zone lying as it does between the higher Wolds and the coast. It is an unexceptional agricultural landscape without a strong sense of place or setting.

5.1.13 The most extensive Local Landscape Type is the Sloping Farmland which lies on the higher land abutting the Wolds. It is characterised as being open and arable, with significant outer views afforded by its openness and elevation. On the lower

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

slopes, extending to the flatter, more low-lying coastal districts are areas of Open Farmland and Wooded Open Farmland, distinguished by the relatively higher disposition of larger woodland blocks in the latter.

5.1.14 Areas close to the A180 are often effected by traffic noise. This can have a detracting influence on the quality of the Landscape Character.

5.1.15 In summary four Local Landscape Types have been identified in the Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes LCA, these are:

Bi - Open Farmland. This zone extends northwards from the outskirts of Grimsby. Its western edge runs parallel with the main railway line and its eastern edge follows the A180 east of the 10m contour.

Bii - Wooded Open Farmland. This area lies to the west and north west of Grimsby and Cleethorpes. Its northern extent lies on the Borough boundary near Habrough; its southern at the Borough boundary near Holton-le-Clay. The Borough boundary and the A18 mark its western extent and the outskirts of Grimsby and Cleethorpes, the B1210 and main railway line its eastern edge.

Biii - Flat Open Farmland. This small area lies to the south of Cleethorpes, extending south to the Borough boundary.

Biv - Sloping Farmland. This occurs between the Borough boundary in the vicinity of Irby-upon-Humber to the north and Ashby-cum-Fenby to the south. The area's western boundary approximates the 60m contour and the eastern edge mostly follows the A18 Barton Street.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

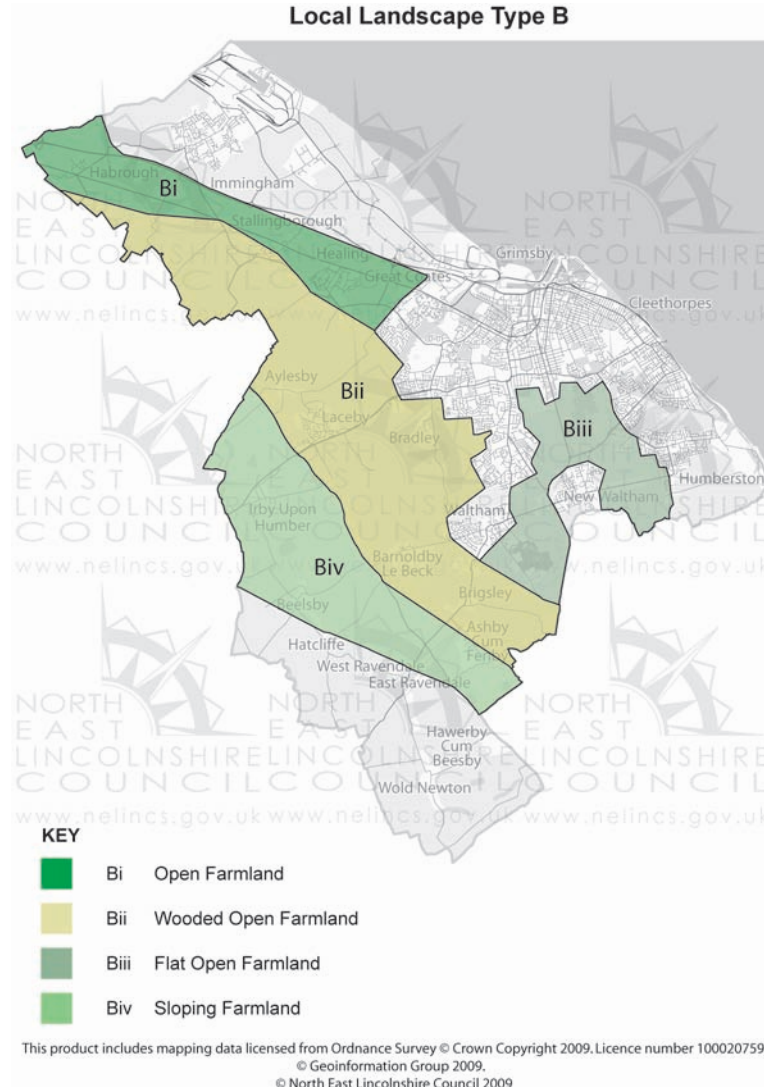


Figure 5.2 Local Landscape Types B

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

5.2 Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes Landscape Character Area Guidelines

Introduction

5.2.1 The following guidance covers issues relevant to the Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes Landscape Character Area.

5.2.2 The issues addressed are:

- Settlements and Buildings
- Infrastructure
- Land Management
- Field Boundaries
- Trees and Woodlands

Landscape Strategy

5.2.3 The landscapes of the Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes do not demonstrate the strength of character expressed in some other regional districts, always having a transitional feel as the scenery drifts off the Wolds to the coast. The greater degree of woodland cover seen in the south of the district is the key to the district's landscape development. Overall landscape strategies should seek to both conserve and enhance the landscape. Enhancement strategies should be implemented mainly through tree, hedgerow, woodland planting and management initiatives.

Settlements and Buildings

Description 18

The arrangement and distribution of many villages date from the medieval period, or have evolved gradually over many years. It is important that the character of the villages, or of the landscapes within which they are located, is not undermined by the insensitive expansion of settlements or the gradual tendency towards coalescence of villages and/or towns. Expansion plans should be considered in the context of their potential impact on the layout of existing settlements and the possible inappropriate 'rationalisation' of settlement boundaries (losing the traditional random, indented boundaries which give a more interesting and varied transition between built and open rural environments). The open landscape between settlements is not only valued by local residents, it also plays an important visual and physical separating role and this is particularly significant between villages and urban settlements where rural character

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

of individual villages could be lost or drastically weakened through coalescence. Careful consideration should therefore be given to any proposals that may adversely affect the character or extent of open land separating individual villages /or urban areas. In this respect, areas of greatest pressure would include land between Grimsby, Cleethorpes, Waltham, New Waltham and Humberston, and between Healing, Stallingborough, Great Coates and Grimsby, although the principal applies to all areas of separation. Where appropriate, notwithstanding any mandatory requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment, any significant development proposal affecting such areas should be subject to assessment in accordance with current best practice for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Landscape Character Assessment.

Aim

The historic or gradually evolved distribution and arrangement of rural settlements should be protected. New development should seek to avoid any tendency towards the coalescence of settlements.

LCA Guideline 18

Seek to preserve the historic or gradually evolved distribution and arrangement of rural settlements and avoid insensitive and inappropriate expansion, or loss of character and the perception of separation, through coalescence of settlements.

Description 19

Rural settlements on the higher slopes, such as Irby upon Humber and Beelsby, tend to have a stronger character whilst those on lower slopes, such as Laceby, have an eroded character due to recent expansion that often appears awkward both in relation to the towns and countryside.

Aim

Rural settlements on the higher slopes should accommodate development pressures through sensitive infill. The expansion of rural settlements should be more favoured in towns and villages on the lower slopes.

LCA Guideline 19

Seek to accommodate rural expansion in villages situated on the lower slopes in preference to those higher.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

Description 20

Most villages are tight-knit and nucleated around street patterns that have difficulty coping with modern traffic demands. Typically villages display a strong architectural character with building materials, styles and scales blending to create attractive street scenes.

Aim

Demands for development should be accommodated through the careful reinterpretation of traditional architectural styles. As a mechanism to achieve this 'Village Design Statements' should be prepared. These provide a design agenda for planning officers and could be used as a tool to aid consultation between developers, inhabitants and local authorities.

Refer also to Page 110 of NELC Urban Design Framework (Design North East Lincolnshire - Places and spaces renaissance. March 2008)

LCA Guideline 20

Seek to ensure any new development carefully reflects the local architectural vernacular.

Description 21

The elevated dipping topography of this area affords extensive views both eastward towards the Humber Estuary and the coast and westward to the Lincolnshire Wolds.

Aim

In any new development it is important that the widest possible visual impacts are fully considered in environmental assessments.

LCA Guideline 21

Seek to ensure that visual impact assessments fully consider the widest possible scenery

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

Description 22

Many parish villages have prominent churches with their steeples, or more commonly towers, visible across wide areas.

Aim

Any village infill or expansion should ensure that views to parish churches are not restricted.

LCA Guideline 22

Seek to ensure that views to churches are not lost in new development

Infrastructure

Description 23

The A180(T) which bisects the district, linking Grimsby and Cleethorpes to Scunthorpe and the west, is visually prominent.

Aim

Landscaping measures should be initiated that seek to improve its relationship with the wider countryside. Woodland planting should be encouraged at key locations particularly adjacent to existing woodland blocks or close to settlements.

Noise from the A180 should also be considered as this can have a detracting effect on the character of an area. Noise attenuation measures should be implemented when opportunities arise.

LCA Guideline 23

Seek to implement landscape mitigation measures along the A180(T) corridor. (including noise attenuation)

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

Description 24

Although not within the Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes, the numerous large scale oil refineries, port complexes and towns lying along the coastal fringe are visually intrusive and are prominent detracting elements to views from the more elevated dipping slopes of the Wolds.

Aim

Large-scale developments attracted to the industrial complexes close to the coast should consider their widest visual impact and implement landscape mitigation measures to reduce at least their local and, where possible, wider scale impact.

LCA Guideline 24

Seek to ensure that large-scale infrastructure developments close to the coast consider their widest possible visual impact.

Description 25

Railways linking the coastal settlements and industrial complexes are highly visible as they traverse the landscape in several directions.

Aim

Landscape measures should be encouraged to mitigate their impact. In some locations this can be achieved in conjunction with measures to limit impacts related to the A180(T). Where woodland planting is planned it should be in discontinuous sections and with regularly arranged medium to large scale blocks.

LCA Guideline 25

Seek to implement landscape mitigation measures along railway lines.

Description 26

The landscape of this district owes much of its character to the topography of the hills and the land-cover. The land-cover is agricultural. The process of agricultural intensification, which has characterised much of post-war English agriculture, is evident

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

in the landscape. In keeping with other agricultural districts in the Borough, four main trends can be identified: loss of hedgerows through enlargement of fields; increase in arable production at the expense of permanent and temporary grassland; the abandonment of traditional farm buildings and erection of larger agri-industrial complexes; and the loss of grassland verge and hedgerow diversity due to the greater use of fertiliser.

Aim

It is questionable whether these trends of intensification will continue in the context of an EU agricultural policy increasingly designed to contain, if not reduce, the intensity of arable production in the community. Whatever the agri-political arguments, in an effort to redress the effects of progressive intensification, measures at a local-scale should seek to limit further degradation of the 'visual infrastructure' of the farmed landscape, i.e. hedgerows, woodlands and traditional farm buildings.

LCA Guideline 26

Seek to mitigate the cumulative effects of agricultural intensification.

Field Boundaries

Description 27

The Enclosure Acts resulted in the creation of a farmed landscape with large, regularly sized fields. Despite this, the demands of increased mechanisation in the farmed economy has resulted in the enlargement of fields and consequent loss of hedgerows.

Aim

Hedgerow planting and management should be encouraged across much of the district, particularly on lower slopes where the hedges are generally in poorer condition and less frequent.

LCA Guideline 27

Encourage the planting of new hedgerows.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

Description 28

On the lower slopes, watercourses become increasingly man-modified and are often used as field boundaries. These watercourses are neither visually or ecologically prominent in the landscape.

Aim

Strategies should be encouraged that promote the prominence of watercourses in the landscape. Waterside planting combined with profile re-modelling, where appropriate, would be suitable techniques to achieve this.

LCA Guideline 28

Seek to increase the visual and ecological prominence of watercourses.

Description 29

Agricultural intensification has seen the gradual decline of hedgerow trees in the landscape.

Aim

An increase in hedgerow trees should generally be encouraged during existing hedgerow management or renewal. The choice of tree species should reflect the setting, for example, on higher slopes oak and ash would be appropriate, on middle slopes, oak and elm while on the flatter, lower slopes, willow, alder and poplar would be appropriate.

LCA Guideline 29

Seek to increase the general representation of hedgerow trees in the landscape.

Description 30

Remaining hedges in the landscape have an enhanced visual prominence due to the openness of views and lack of other traditional landscape elements.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

Aim

Seek to ensure that existing hedgerows are protected and managed to ensure their short, medium and long-term survival.

LCA Guideline 30

Seek to ensure that existing hedgerows are managed to ensure their survival.

Trees and Woodlands

Description 31

In this open, expansive landscape existing woodland blocks have an enhanced visual presence.

Aim

Encourage the protection of existing woodland blocks and the preparation of management plans to improve their age, species and structural diversity.

LCA Guideline 31

Encourage the preparation of management plans to ensure the survival and development of established woodlands.

Description 32

Existing woodlands are important landscape features offering local enclosure, visual diversity and ecological interest.

Aim

The planting of new woodlands should be encouraged.

LCA Guideline 32

Seek to encourage the planting of new woodlands.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

5.3 Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes Local Landscape Type

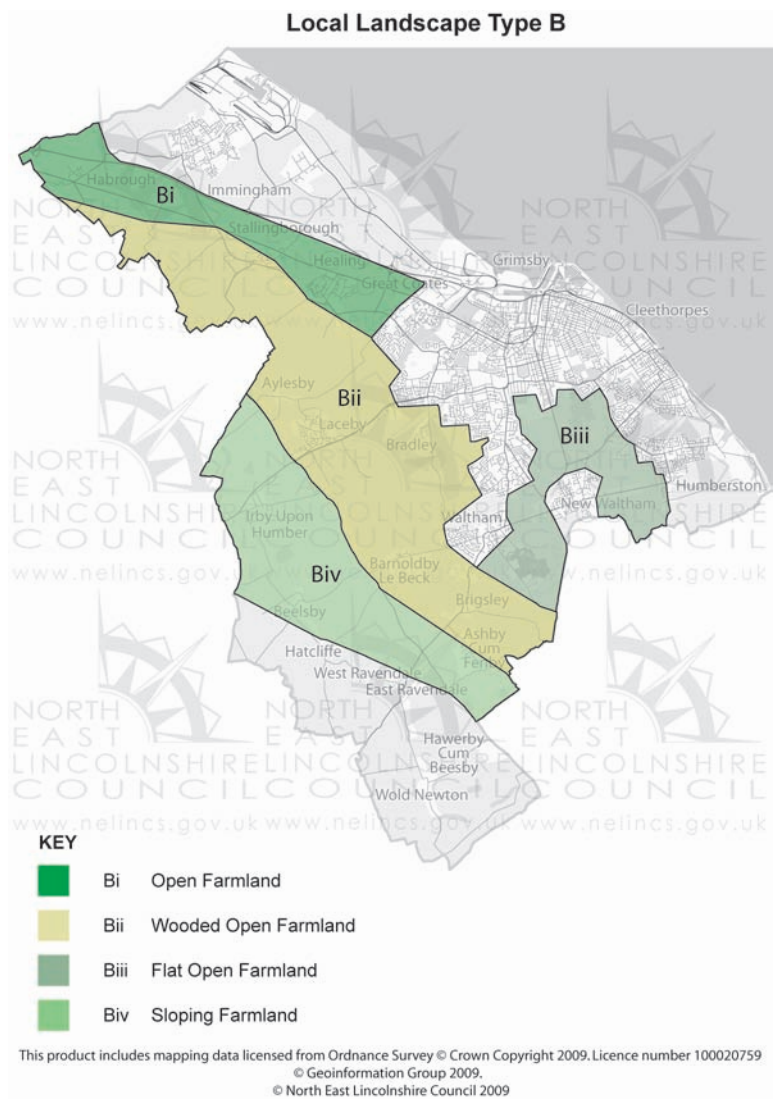


Figure 5.3 Local Landscape Types B

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

5.3.1 The following issues have been selected from the main body and are specific to the Local Landscape Types for the Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes Landscape Character Area. This section is concerned with 'local' issues such as trees and woodlands, field boundaries and local management.

5.3.2 The following Local Landscape Types are considered:

- Bi - Open Farmland
- Bii - Wooded Open Farmland
- Biii - Flat open Farmland
- Biv - Sloping Farmland

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

Bi - Open Farmland (Stallingborough and Healing)

Local Issues

5.3.3 Seek to initiate landscape policies of conservation and local enhancement across this gently undulating and dipping farmed landscape in which traditional landscape elements such as hedgerows, woods and farm buildings are being degraded in extent and quality. Some of most important issues are listed below (NB some of these points are already included in the main body of the text but are discussed here in more detail)

- The protection of existing landscape features such as hedgerows, woodlands and hedgerow trees from further losses should be promoted.
- Effects of agricultural intensification on rural structure are noticeable. Hedgerow related policies of renewal, management and tree planting combined with road verge management and limited woodland planting should be encouraged to repair the degraded rural structure.
- New woodland planting should be encouraged where it would offer screening, habitat potential or visual amenity. In general blocks should be small (i.e. 1 to 4 hectares) and irregularly shaped, sited on more elevated ground and ideally linked with existing woodland blocks, streams or primary hedgerows.
- The elevated drier land of the Wolds dip-slope has attracted settlements for centuries. The distribution of villages and hamlets today should be protected. In landscape terms, demands for rural accommodation would be difficult to integrate in this district. Provision for new accommodation should be sought through limited and sensitive infill.
- Any rural development should ensure that modern housing designs contribute to local identity, local character and reflect local building styles and materials to enhance the environment.

Bii - Wooded Open Farmland (Laceby, Barnoldby-le-Beck, Ashby-cum-Fenby)

Local Issues

5.3.4 Policies should be designed to locally enhance landscape structure degraded through intensification in recent years of agricultural production. The landscape is characteristically open with the exception of the presence of medium sized woodland blocks that offer local interest and variety. Policies should be aimed at woodland management, hedgerow renewal and management and the creation of new woodlands. Some of most important issues are listed below (NB some of these points are already included in the main body of the text but are discussed here in more detail)

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

- Existing woodland blocks have an important compositional role in the landscape providing a level of enclosure and diversity. The protection of these woodlands is a priority.
- Many woodlands in this district are of a moderate size (i.e. 3 to 5 hectares) and of an estate plantation origin. Management plans should be drawn up to seek economically viable use of these woods whilst seeking to maximise their visual and ecological diversity.
- Most woodlands are of a mixed deciduous composition. Management plans should seek to incorporate locally occurring tree and shrub species.
- In general new woodland planting is of limited necessity. However, any new woods should be of a moderate scale. It is a wide and mostly open landscape in which such woodland blocks tend to sit at an appropriate scale in the landscape. Extensive small woodland clumps and field corner planting would generally appear awkward and discordant.
- New planting strategies should be combined with the restoration and renewal of selective hedgerows. These hedges would offer a compositional role in the landscape and also scope for improved wildlife dispersal between woodlands.
- Roadside hedgerow trees, especially oaks, are locally characteristic giving filtered views through the landscape. Many of these trees, however, are mature and in most cases there are few younger replacements. To maintain and reinforce this character, initiatives to increase the number of younger trees should be employed. A relatively low-cost option is for young saplings to be selected through careful hedgerow management, and allowed to mature.
- Smaller scale woodland planting should only be selectively encouraged. New planting around intrusive farm buildings, on the periphery of rural settlements and along primary transportation corridors should be considered.
- Refer also to Page 110 of NELC Urban Design Framework (Design North East Lincolnshire - Places and spaces renaissance. March 2008) regarding rural development and building styles.

Biii - Flat Open Farmland (South Cleethorpes)

Local Issues

- 5.3.5** The flat drained landscape supports a particularly intensive level of agriculture. The scenery is mostly open, broken up by the edge of Cleethorpes. Because of the lack of conventional rural structure, broad landscape strategies should be of enhancement, seeking to encourage more hedgerows, trees, woodlands and general screening to the built-up areas which are visually intrusive. Some of most important issues are listed below (NB some of these points are already included in the main body of the text but are discussed here in more detail)

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

- The few existing woodland blocks have an important compositional role in the landscape, offering visual containment and diversity. Retention of these woodlands is important.
- Many of the existing woodlands have a shelterbelt role and a generally geometric and linear arrangement. This pattern emphasises their visual presence in the landscape. New shelterbelt woodland planting of a similar style should be encouraged to increase the perception of woodland cover and offer enhanced screening opportunity around Cleethorpes.
- The general condition and distribution of hedgerows in this landscape type is very poor. Most hedges are closely trimmed, gappy, dying back at the base or absent. Such hedges would benefit from management allowing them to grow taller and thicker. Hedgerow tree regeneration should also be encouraged. Cutting on a three-yearly, rather than yearly cycle would increase the visual representation and ecological diversity of these hedgerows.
- The historic pattern of large hedged fields is being eroded through farm amalgamation, field enlargement and urbanisation. Although the flat topography does not allow field patterns to register strongly, consideration should be given to re-creation of lost hedgerows, particularly alongside lanes, footpaths, bridleways, streams and parish boundaries.
- Due to closeness of the Humber, modified drainage systems become increasingly influential, often affecting the perception of openness. Most ditches, dykes and watercourses have few associated trees, hedgerows or vegetation. Opportunities should be investigated in consultation with the Environment Agency and relevant Internal Drainage Boards to increase the occurrence of streamside vegetation. Such a policy would offer both visual and ecological benefits.

Biv - Sloping Farmland (Irby-upon-Humber to Ashby-cum-Fenby)

Local Issues

- 5.3.6** Seek to protect and locally enhance this distinctive local landscape through the continued protection and strengthening of hedgerows and shelterbelt woodland blocks. In particular, the landscape elements such as regular fields, robust hedgerows and geometric shelterbelts should be conserved to reflect the area's important context. Some of the most important issues are listed below (NB some of these points are already included in the main body of the text but are discussed here in more detail)
- Seek to conserve village character by limiting insensitive expansion and excessive infilling of open space.
 - To maintain the continuity of village structure and character, developments should seek to re-use existing redundant buildings or ensure that any new buildings complement local building styles, materials and context.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes

- Seek to accommodate new structures in a 'valley context' to minimise skyline interruption and visual intrusion in an otherwise open landscape where outer views both to the higher Wolds landscape and across to the lower-lying coastal plain are important.
- Promote the protection and enhancement of remnants of chalk-rich grassland, ancient woodland and spring-fed natural watercourses which, in an intensive agricultural landscape, are generally under threat from farm intensification.
- Seek to increase the percentage cover of woodland. New woodlands should mostly be of a geometric arrangement acting as shelterbelts and, wherever possible, linked to established woodland blocks. New designs for woodlands should seek to accommodate new woodland blocks on the more elevated land, to emphasise variations in topography, whilst ensuring that outward wider views are not lost but ideally framed.
- Encourage the retention of hedgerows in the landscape and initiatives to replace sections of lost hedgerow. The hedges should be managed regularly to ensure that their robust structure is maintained.
- Promote the planting of trees into hedgerows to introduce an increasing degree of visual enclosure, as the land becomes flatter and low-lying.
- Trees introduced into hedgerows and new woodlands should be indigenous to the area. Predominantly native or naturalised broadleaved species, such as ash, pedunculate oak sycamore and bird cherry should be used, locally complemented by more exotic species such as hybrid larch and selected pines.
- The protection of hedgerows, often combined with a more intimate field arrangement, mature trees and shelterbelts around rural settlements should be promoted where they provide shelter and a sense of proportion and balance to the built environment. Where such landscape features are poorly represented close to settlements, strategies should be initiated for their appropriate introduction.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

(Landscape Character Area C Lincolnshire Wolds)

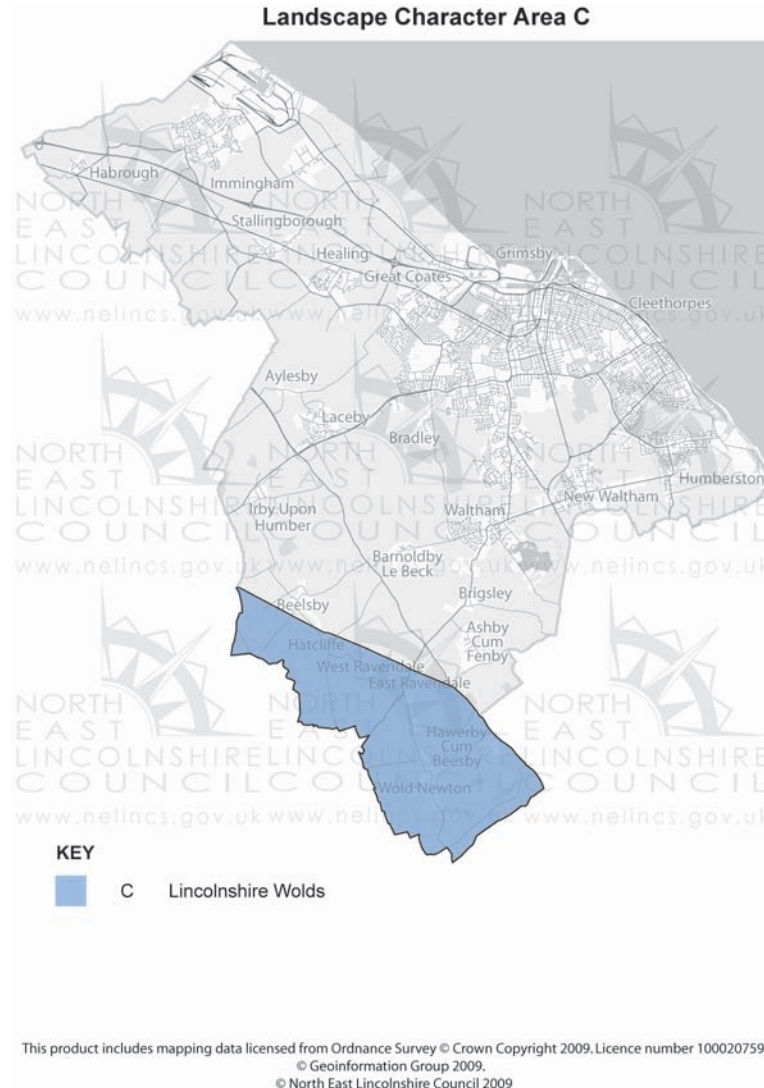


Figure 6.1 Landscape Character Area C Lincolnshire Wolds

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

6.1 The Lincolnshire Wolds Landscape Character

Introduction

- 6.1.1** The Lincolnshire Wolds rise as a clearly defined escarpment from the Ancholme Valley and Vale of Lincoln in the west (outside the Borough) to form a plateau of low, rolling hills which dip gently eastwards as the land falls towards the North Sea coast. Typically 15km wide, the tract extends from the Humber Estuary in the north to the Lincolnshire Fens and the Wash in the south. Geographically most of the protected landscape of the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB lies within Lincolnshire with North East Lincolnshire containing only a small portion.
- 6.1.2** Within North East Lincolnshire the Wolds are evident in the extreme south-west corner of the Borough. Here the chalk dip slope is dissected by streams and the scenery possesses a gentle charm characterised by rolling terrain, expansive outer views, regular woodland shelterbelts and attractive villages sheltered in the deeper valleys. Most of the Wolds LCA within North East Lincolnshire is included within the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, (except for a portion to the north of the AONB) reflecting the overall quality of the landscape.

Physical Influences

- 6.1.3** Geologically the Lincolnshire Wolds are more complex than the Yorkshire Wolds to the north of the Humber. This complexity derives from the fact that the chalk deposits are thinner, approximately 50 metres thick. Due to this, along the lower escarpment slopes to the west edge of the Wolds, and in the deeper valleys, underlying Cretaceous sands, clays and ironstones outcrop to affect the overlying soils, vegetation and land use.
- 6.1.4** Ice did not extend across the Wolds during the last glaciation. The intensity of climatic and periglacial conditions, however, led to a softening and rounding of the hills. Following de-glaciation, complex fluvio-glacial and aeolian processes operated extensively across the Wolds. In the west, aeolian sands banked up against the Wolds escarpment whilst, in the east, a complex depositional environment of lakes, rivers and deltaic spillways washed across the Wolds dip slope leading to the accumulation of sands and gravels in the eastern valleys, many of which were over-deepened during this period.
- 6.1.5** A further process at this time resulted from sea level changes induced by isostatic and eustatic changes.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

- 6.1.6** The complexity of the area's solid geology and drift deposits is reflected in the overlying soil and land use patterns. Plateau tops exhibit high chalky soils (Grade 2) which lend themselves to arable cropping, whilst on the escarpment and valley sides, the Jurassic rocks give rise to deeper, more varied soils. Local pockets of boulder clay result in heavy, seasonally waterlogged soils, more suited to pasture.
- 6.1.7** The deposits of wind-blown sands produce sandy, brown earth soils. The free-draining nature of these render repeated arable cropping difficult without high inputs of fertiliser.

Human Influences

- 6.1.8** The Lincolnshire Wolds have seen recurrent patterns of settlement over several thousand years. During prehistoric times the Wolds were extensively cleared of trees and many defensive, burial and boundary structures put in place. Unfortunately, few of these sites are visible due to repeated cultivation of the land.
- 6.1.9** Recurrent settlement in Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Danish periods is evidenced by roads, place names and the presence of medieval villages. The Domesday survey records that by 1086 much of the Wolds was under arable cropping, under the open field system. From the 12th Century, many villages were deserted due to changes in land use, plague and population movements. Most of the visible evidence of these villages has now been lost, except to the trained eye.
- 6.1.10** Parliamentary Enclosure patterns and 20th Century agricultural intensification have had significant influence on the Wolds landscape, contributing to the dominance of large fields bounded by low hedgerows. New Georgian manor parks and farm granges were built, often away from the villages. Enclosure Award roads (or drove roads) with their characteristic wide open verges were constructed to transport sheep both between markets and to the coastal marshes for fattening.

Ecological Influences

- 6.1.11** The Lincolnshire Wolds have been intensively farmed and the extent of semi-natural habitat is very limited. The habitats that remain of interest are chalk grassland, ancient or long-established woodlands and wet flushes. Such habitats are very restricted in size and occurrence.
- 6.1.12** Unimproved natural grassland is potentially non-existent in the Wolds (within North East Lincolnshire) although re-colonisation of exposed chalk faces in old quarries, road and rail cuttings and thin-soiled road verges has often led to the development of an interesting calcareous grassland flora.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

- 6.1.13** The woodlands of the Wolds tend to be of a planted origin, but support calcicole species such as ash, sycamore and beech. They often provide local refuges for birds and mammals.

Visual Characteristics of the Landscape

- 6.1.14** The Lincolnshire Wolds comprise a Landscape Character Area within which a range of historical and geological influences act together to produce a landscape that has an overall coherence of character and internal diversity of type. In broad terms, visual characteristics common across the Wolds are the sweeping and rolling terrain, openness of views, dominance of arable land use with its seasonally changing colours and textures, drove roads, thin chalky soils and the shelterbelt woodlands of the valleys.
- 6.1.15** The portion of the Lincolnshire Wolds LCA within North East Lincolnshire lies to the south west of Grimsby and Cleethorpes. It has been identified as having a single Local Landscape Type, summarised as follows:
- Ci - High Farmland.** This area lies mostly to the south west of the villages of Beelsby, Hatcliffe and East Ravendale and extends outwards to the Borough boundary.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

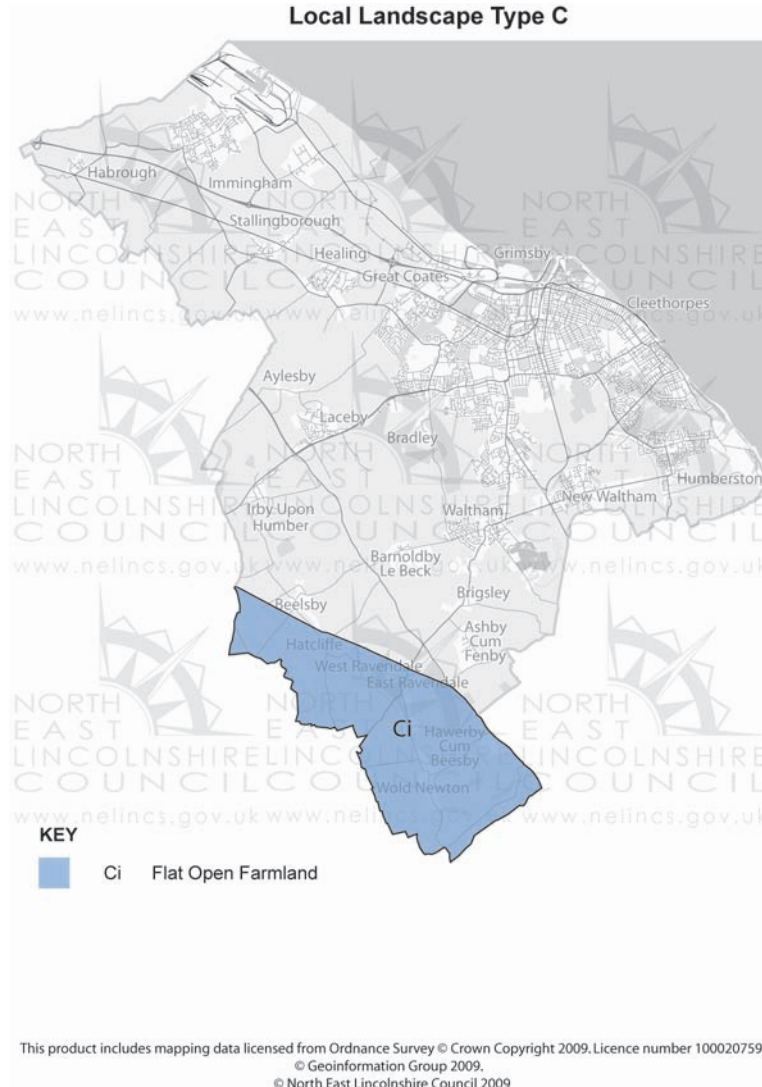


Figure 6.2 Local Landscape Type C

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

6.2 Lincolnshire Wolds Landscape Character Area Guidelines

Introduction

6.2.1 The following guidance covers issues relevant to the Lincolnshire Wolds Landscape Character area.

6.2.2 The issues addressed are:

- Settlements and Buildings
- Infrastructure, i.e. highways, power transmission
- Land Management
- Field Boundaries
- Trees and Woodlands

Landscape Strategy

6.2.3 The Wolds possess a gentle charm characterised by gently rolling terrain with expansive views and well-managed fields and buildings. The openness of the sloping chalk farmland is accentuated by the enclosed and intimate character of parklands and small villages encountered on the lower slopes and valleys. The Landscape Strategy recognises the national importance of the Lincolnshire Wolds ANOB. This area has been highlighted by the CPRE as having some of the darkest skies in the country therefore light pollution is an important issue. The landscape of the Lincolnshire Wolds is fragile and vulnerable to change through insensitive development or inappropriate land management. The overall strategy for planning and management is therefore one of conservation.

Settlements and Buildings

Description 33

The presence of large farmsteads scattered through the Wolds is characteristic. Usually farms are divorced from villages and situated away from adjacent roads.

Aim

Seek to conserve the isolated and nucleated settlement pattern by avoiding inappropriate new development in the countryside.

LCA Guideline 33

LW1

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Aim

LCA Guideline 33

Any coalescence of villages and farmsteads should be resisted.

Description 34

Farms tend to have their buildings clustered around the original, usually brick built, 19th Century farmhouse.

Aim

New farm development should seek to maintain this nucleated arrangement.

LCA Guideline 34

LW2

Seek to preserve the nuclear arrangement of new farm buildings.

Description 35

Farmsteads have a strong visual presence in the Wolds landscape. This is often emphasised by their elevated location, the openness of views, shelterbelts and isolated, though nucleated arrangement.

Aim

Changes of use, modifications in layout or introduction of new buildings within existing farmsteads could be damaging to farm character. Re-use of existing buildings is preferable to the construction of new. Where modern demands for agri-industrial scale buildings necessitate the construction of large structures these should,

LCA Guideline 35

LW3

Seek to respect local building styles, materials and arrangements in any essential new developments.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Aim

wherever possible, be located away from skylines, shielded by existing mature shelterbelts and built to a height, mass and scale complementary to existing farm buildings.

LCA Guideline 35

Description 36

Grain silos in the Wolds landscape are highly visible due to their size and the openness of views.

Aim

Wherever possible land managers should be encouraged to locate new silos away from skylines, close to mature shelterbelts and to render them less obtrusive by painting with a matt or mid-range colour. If possible, new shelterbelt planting should be introduced. New woodland planting should require the accompanying production of woodland management plans for the retention and augmentation of accompanying existing woodland blocks and shelterbelts.

LCA Guideline 36

LW4

Carefully address siting, scale and detail of grain silos.

Description 37

The landscape of the Wolds is agricultural, having evolved principally through agrarian pressures and demands.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Aim

The introduction of non-agricultural based buildings outside villages such as petrol stations, roadside hotels and holiday parks would be inappropriate in landscape terms.

LCA Guideline 37

Carefully evaluate the introduction of non-agricultural based development, unless utilising existing buildings.

Description 38

The nature and appearance of isolated nucleated villages is characteristic of some parts of the Wolds. Many of these villages have very old historical connections.

Aim

Seek to accommodate any pressures for new housing by carefully controlling village expansion, rather than either significant infill or new villages. Inappropriate village infilling may cause loss or damage to important village features such as mature trees, greens, ponds or views of gable ends. In landscape terms, village infill would only be acceptable if designed in the context of the existing village fabric, i.e. re-use of redundant buildings or derelict plots. Village expansion requires careful consideration to ensure sites of local landscape, ecological or archaeological importance are not damaged.

LCA Guideline 38

Notwithstanding a general presumption against new housing, seek to accommodate exceptional demands by sympathetic expansion of selected villages, rather than infill.

Description 39

Rural settlements in the Wolds are scattered and tightly knit, a feature that lends much to the Wolds isolated character.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Aim

Within the Wolds there should be a presumption to restrain development in all but a few of the larger villages.

LCA Guideline 39

Seek to restrain inappropriate new development in most rural settlements.

Description 40

Villages tend to have a mature, established character. Construction materials such as limestone, chalk, brick and pantile combine with attractive village arrangements that include ponds, greens, irregular outlines and a diversity of building sizes.

Aim

It is important that any new development reflects existing scales, architecture and materials, e.g. bungalows and chalets are usually less appropriate than extensions to existing buildings. It is preferable to re-use existing buildings rather than to build new ones; however, any conversion should reflect the building's existing character.

LCA Guideline 40

Seek to closely reflect local architecture, arrangement and setting in new village development not utilising existing buildings.

Description 41

It is important to retain the character and appearance of rural settlements.

Aim

'Village Design Statements' should be prepared for villages across the Wolds. These design statements should establish design principles at three different levels: the individual buildings; the settlement in which they sit; and the wider landscape. These principles should have regard to the historical evolution of the village, set out acceptable

LCA Guideline 41

Encourage the production of Wolds 'Village Design Statements' and "Parish Plans"

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Aim

architectural design standards, and ideally be prepared in consultation with local Parish Councils. They should be used as a mechanism to aid consultation between inhabitants and planning officers in the pursuit of sensitive rural development. The production of Parish Plans should also be supported and encouraged.

LCA Guideline 41

Infrastructure

Description 42

The quiet rural nature of the Wolds with its expansive views across the rolling terrain is, in places, degraded by intrusion from traffic noise and visibility. This includes visibility of large trunk road signs and transmission lines that often run parallel with the roads.

Aim

Landscape integration projects should be encouraged to reduce such problems through the implementation of measures such as roadside hedgerow thickening and replanting, and strategic off-site woodland planting.

LCA Guideline 42

Seek to conserve rural character by avoiding any inappropriate new highway or power transmission alignments requiring a crossing of the Lincolnshire Wolds.

Where overhead power lines are unavoidable then alternative sites, routes, or systems should be considered along with appropriate mitigation measures.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Description 43

The elevated and expansive quality of the Wolds landscape is such that the routing of any new highway or power lines would inevitably damage its character in ways that would be difficult to mitigate.

Aim

Any such proposals should be subject to rigorous environmental assessment at a strategic level, i.e. does the line need to cross the Lincolnshire Wolds or are other alignments possible?

LCA Guideline 43

Continue to use environmental assessment to guide infrastructure schemes or improvements.

Description 44

The widened verge Enclosure Award roads (drove roads) are key components of the Wolds landscape. Improvements to meet modern highway standards can be detrimental to their character particularly if alien or urban treatments are used, e.g. concrete kerbs, standardised road signs, street clutter, village gateway schemes and road markings. Maintenance work can also cause damage to verges, e.g. by filling of ditches, re-seeding with inappropriate grass mixes or clearance of trees for sight lines.

Aim

Advice of landscape professionals at an early stage would minimise likely damage to road character during such improvements. Adoption of a 'rural roads hierarchy,' in terms of highway standards, maintenance and signage, may also allow current statutory standards to be waived in favour of a conservation and recreation-led approach for certain rural roads. Such an approach would balance the need for on-going road engineering works to meet rising traffic demand with the need to respect local character.

LCA Guideline 44

Seek to conserve road character by limiting 'urbanised' highway treatment. Note: some consideration could be given to "Quiet Roads Schemes" where pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders are given priority.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Description 45

Road verges in the Wolds are characteristically wide. They are visually prominent and are important ecological refuges for chalk flora and fauna.

Aim

Management by annual mowing, including the removal of cuttings on an occasional or site specific basis, combined with scrub clearance would increase local biodiversity. During maintenance work topsoil should not be imported but generated from a local source to retain provenance of the seed bank.

LCA Guideline 45

Seek to conserve 'drove road' verge character by promoting scrub clearance and ecologically-led grassland management to key verges.

Description 46

Vertical structures cannot easily be assimilated into the open rolling landscape of the Wolds. In elevated and skyline positions they can be highly prominent. For example, transmission pylons traversing the Wolds can be visible across vast areas, including the Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes.

Neighbouring developments such as windfarms, transmission lines etc. can also impact on the setting of the Wolds and disrupt views into and from the AONB. Cumulative impacts are becoming an increasing issue, particularly with neighbouring windfarms that can be seen from the AONB

Aim

There will continue to be pressure to locate certain developments, such as telecommunications, military and wind power structures, which are likely to form prominent features in the Wolds landscape. The extent to which they are likely to be detrimental to the landscape, however, will depend upon their siting,

LCA Guideline 46

Seek to prohibit the introduction of inappropriate wind farms, transmission lines and large scale telecommunications structures.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Aim

design and scale and the extent to which the local topography and land-cover will enable effective assimilation. There may be opportunities to accommodate limited development without harm but proposals which would industrialise the open expansive nature of the Wolds would conflict with its essential character.

LCA Guideline 46

Consider the nature of cumulative impacts with particular regard to neighbouring windfarms, transmission lines etc.

Where overhead power lines are unavoidable then alternative sites, routes, or systems could be considered along with appropriate mitigation measures.

Land Management

Description 47

Historically the Wolds landscape has been largely shaped by agricultural practices. The impact of recent agricultural intensification on land use patterns has not been serious, although localised field enlargement and farm amalgamation has led to some loss of landscape definition.

Aim

Local degradation of landscape structure through agricultural intensification may need correction by restoration of smaller field patterns. Any such proposals should be responsive to local historic field patterns.

LCA Guideline 47

Seek to maintain existing field patterns and avoid further field enlargement.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Description 48

The Wolds landscape is agricultural. Modern farming practices based on subsidies and grants have resulted in the creation of simple arable scenery dominated by a limited number of crops.

Aim

It is beyond the scope of these landscape guidelines to prescribe the types of cropping or husbandry that should take place across the Lincolnshire Wolds. However, it is in the interest of visual and biological diversity that no single agricultural system is promoted above all others. A number of agricultural practices have declined as a result of unfavourable economics, but are worthy of promotion as mid to long-term uses of set-aside land. These include the restoration of chalk grassland on previously tilled land, retention and restoration of permanent pasture, and possibly the localised increase in the number of livestock.

This could also be promoted through Agri-environmental schemes which provide funding to farmers to farm in a way that supports biodiversity and enhances the landscape as well as other benefits.

LCA Guideline 48

Through active economic intervention (such as Agri-environmental schemes) seek to maximise a diversification of agricultural activity.

Description 49

No landscape should be a static rural idyll resistant to all landscape change. The Wolds landscape remains agricultural, highly productive and responsive to modern economies and changes in the rural economy.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Aim

Though significant alteration to the appearance of the landscape should be resisted, opportunities for localised agricultural extensification should be considered and investigated.

LCA Guideline 49

Seek to encourage agricultural extensification (ie farming that uses a relatively low level of inputs)

Description 50

Increased irrigation is leading to aquifer depletion and drying out of spring-fed ditches and vegetation on lower slopes. The introduction of tighter controls on groundwater extraction may ultimately lead to farmers constructing their own small reservoirs.

Aim

Although this has historical precedent in the Wolds, the design and scale of such reservoirs would have landscape implications. New reservoirs should be disguised in the landscape, hidden in hollows or screened by established woodlands. Recreational use of reservoirs should be controlled as active use may conflict with the landscape's quiet rural character. There are opportunities for landscape and habitat improvements. To resist the degree of aquifer depletion, consideration should be given to the encouragement of drought-resistant crops.

LCA Guideline 50

Seek to conserve and protect the ground water aquifers resource via careful monitoring of extraction licences and contamination.

Description 51

The Lincolnshire Wolds are extremely rich in sites of archaeological value ranging from pre-Roman defensive and ritual structures to the medieval deserted plague villages. Many sites have been lost or degraded due to neglect and inappropriate cultivation.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Aim

A Sites and Monuments Register is held by the Council's Archaeology Service and should be consulted before any work is planned. Better interpretation and access to the more interesting and less vulnerable sites would be desirable. Further clarification and protection is required for both protected and non-protected sites. However, any developments of this nature would have to be carefully monitored and administered by specialists in the field.

LCA Guideline 51

LW19

Seek to conserve, protect and promote appropriate management of existing chalk grasslands, permanent pasture, chalk pits, geological sites, hedgerows and features of archaeological value.

Description 52

Existing chalk quarries have varying impacts on the local landscape. Some, such as Melton Ross Chalk Pit in North Lincolnshire, have a significant visual impact.

Aim

Although pressures for quarrying remain, new proposals are strictly controlled by environmental legislation and developers have to demonstrate clear locational need, justify the discounting of alternative sites, and provide detailed proposals for landscape mitigation before, during and after quarrying. It is important that, where possible, advance planting is undertaken around prospective sites in order to more effectively mitigate the wider impact of quarrying activities.

LCA Guideline 52

Seek to ensure that proposals for mineral workings demonstrate assessment of and integration with landscape character.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Description 53

Tourist developments in the form of traditional and newer country pursuits, e.g. recreational shooting, mountain biking, hunting and war games, have less influence on the visual character of the Wolds. However, they can each impart detrimental effects on the local amenity and habitat value of the landscape.

Other tourist developments in the countryside such as picnic areas, caravan sites, and holiday lodges can cause more visual impact on the landscape character.

Aim

Increased population mobility may result in increases in existing, and unforeseen, legitimate recreational activities which have little visual effect but can be noisy and generate traffic. Insofar as such activities are within the remit of planning or land management controls, a balance needs to be struck between legitimate rights and the need to conserve the Wolds landscape. Most of these activities can be better absorbed in a more enclosed wooded landscape than in open situations. It is therefore preferential to cater for such activities in other landscape types.

LCA Guideline 53

Seek to restrict the introduction of 'active' recreational sites to enclosed areas and seek to ensure the protection of this distinctive landscape character from the visual impact of any new tourist facilities.

Description 54

To maintain the national ecological importance of the various chalk grasslands, appropriate management and animal husbandry is required.

Aim

Support for appropriate management regimes should be given and any opportunities to create or enhance chalk grasslands, even of lesser botanical diversity, should be encouraged. This could be achieved through Agri- environmental schemes

LCA Guideline 54

Seek to identify opportunities for recreation of chalk grassland, perhaps through Agri- environmental or voluntary schemes

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Description 55

The Wolds landscape is characteristically quiet and somewhat remote. Research by the CPRE demonstrated the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB offers some of the most tranquil places in the country.

Aim

It is important that the tradition of quiet enjoyment of the countryside is maintained in the control of new recreational activities. Large scale facilities such as golf courses, country parks, caravan/holiday parks could introduce suburban influences to the Wolds and should only be acceptable in limited established localities.

LCA Guideline 55

Seek to control the introduction of 'suburban' recreational activities on new sites.

Description 56

Due to the intensity of arable production the Wolds, general access for the public can be limited.

Aim

The established network of roads, lanes, footpaths and bridleways are therefore important, offering the only legitimate public access to the scenery. Opportunities to improve this access should be encouraged. The waymarking of paths, replacing of stiles with gaps or kissing gates (which are more accessible) , etc. combined with the continued development of picnic sites and the development of long distance routes should be promoted.

LCA Guideline 56

Encourage improved public access to the countryside through good management of the existing Public Rights of Way and the opening up of permissive access. This could be supported through the take up of Agri- environmental schemes.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Field Boundaries

Description 57

The scenery of the Wolds is largely the product of the 18th Century Enclosure Period. The rolling and open terrain was accentuated by the planting of robust and well-trimmed hawthorn hedges enclosing large regular fields. Surveys indicate that post-war hedgerow loss across the Wolds has not been as severe as in other areas.

Aim

Wherever possible, gaps in hedges should be infilled and localised hedgerow replacement encouraged, particularly in prominent or historically significant situations, i.e. along roadsides or parish boundaries.

LCA Guideline 57

Seek to conserve, restore and replace all primary hedgerows (roadsides, bridleways, parish boundaries, dissected valley tops).

Description 58

Hedgerow trees and avenues are not a common feature of the Wolds landscape. However, due to the openness of views and rolling nature of the landscape, where they are present, trees often play an enhanced compositional role in the scene.

Aim

Encourage the protection of mature trees in the landscape. Ash, beech and Field Maple are the dominant trees and few species other than these would be considered appropriate in any new planting. New tree planting will ensure a diverse age range and ecological structure.

LCA Guideline 58

Seek to conserve existing character by resisting further hedgerow tree loss.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Trees and Woodlands

Description 59

The open and somewhat remote character of the Wolds is distinctive. Although woodland cover is limited, the tall and mature shelterbelts are compositionally important, often marking out farmsteads, following skylines and emphasising the rolling terrain. There is also a pattern of "Beech Clump" woodlands which are often located on prominent hilltop locations.

Aim

Any new woodland planting should be of a scale sympathetic to the landscape, in this case, as woodland blocks of 3-10 hectares. The appropriateness of woodland and the nature of its detailed design should be closely related, and proportional to local landscape patterns. New woodland planting should ensure a diverse age range and a diverse ecological structure. Woodland edge habitats should also be encouraged for their contribution to the landscape and to promote biodiversity.

LCA Guideline 59

Seek to conserve and strengthen the open and remote character of the landscape by attention to the size, shape and skyline effects of any new woodland planting, which should be on a limited scale. Any proposals within the AONB should be undertaken in collaboration with Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Advisory Committee.

Description 60

Many of the established buildings across the Wolds, i.e. farmsteads, are closely associated with shelterbelts of a similar age, often enclosing the buildings on three sides.

Aim

New buildings should include the provision of shelterbelt enclosure wherever appropriate, both to reflect the local character and offer scope for mitigation of structures in the open landscape.

LCA Guideline 60

Encourage new woodland planting associated with new buildings.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Description 61

Woodland blocks across the Wolds are almost exclusively of a recent planted origin, dominated by broad-leaved species such as ash, wych elm, pedunculate oak, hazel and hawthorn.

Aim

New woodland planting should reflect the existing native species mixes, wherever possible utilising plants of local provenance. In selected situations other species could make a notable visual contribution although their inclusion in planting mixes should not compromise specific local nature conservation objectives. Such additional species might include beech, sycamore, Scots pine, hybrid larch, field maple and wild cherry.

LCA Guideline 61

Encourage new planting to complement existing native broad-leaved woodland mixes.

Description 62

The well-managed character of the Wolds is partly dependent on good woodland management.

Aim

Land managers and foresters should be encouraged to implement woodland and shelterbelt management plans to ensure the medium and long-term protection and local enhancement of existing woodlands.

LCA Guideline 62

Seek to manage existing woodlands to ensure their short, medium and long-term conservation and enhancement.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

Description 63

Ancient and long-established semi-natural woodland has a limited and fragile distribution, mostly related to steep dry valley slopes.

Aim

Such woodlands require particularly careful management, selective felling and restocking. In particular, a proportion of non-native tree and shrub species should be selectively removed to encourage the development of native species.

LCA Guideline 63

Seek to produce management plans to ensure the development of existing semi-natural woodlands.

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

6.3 Lincolnshire Wolds Local Landscape Type

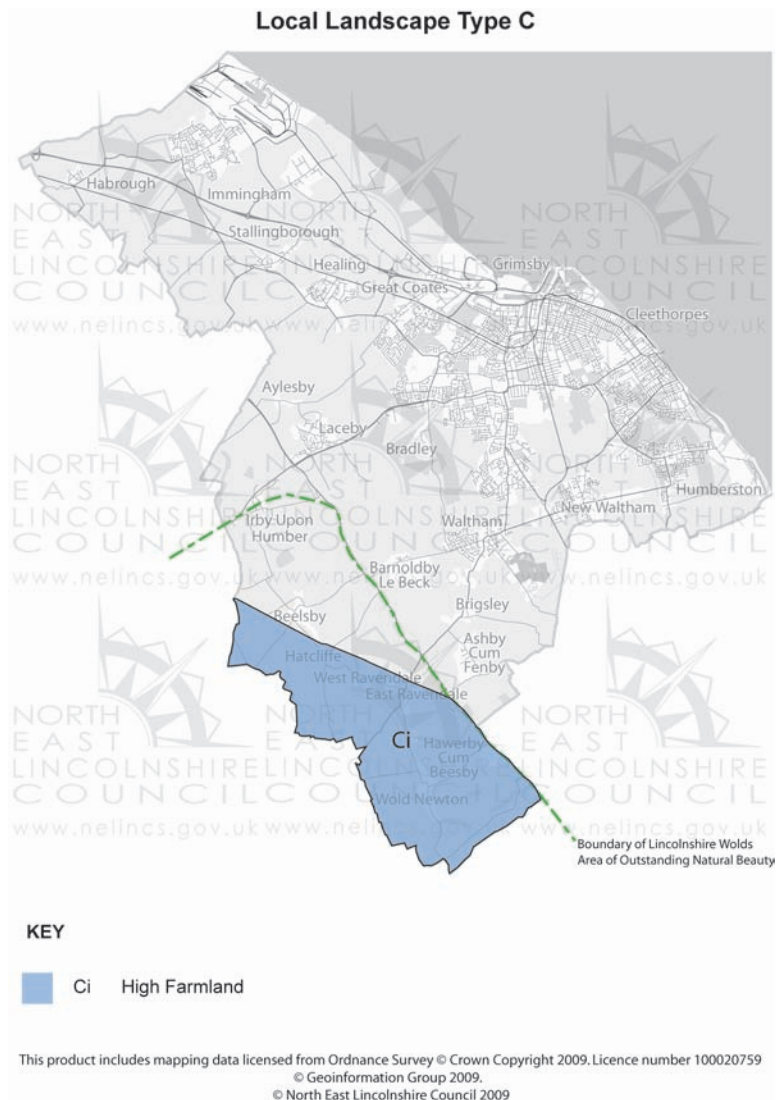


Figure 6.3 Local Landscape Type C

Landscape Assessment: Lincolnshire Wolds

6.3.1 The following issues are specific to the Local Landscape Type for the Lincolnshire Wolds Landscape Character Area. This guidance is concerned with 'local' issues such as trees and woodlands, field boundaries and local management.

6.3.2 The following Local Landscape Types are considered:

- Ci - High Farmland

Ci - High Farmland (all of the Wolds area in North East Lincolnshire)

Local Issues

6.3.3 Conserve and strengthen the open, somewhat remote character of this simple rolling landscape. NB some of these issues are already included in the main body of the text but are discussed here in more detail)

- Seek to conserve the existing pattern of isolated large farmsteads and open views across rural land by avoiding new development in the open countryside.
- Wherever possible new agricultural buildings should normally be located within, or adjacent to, existing farmstead curtilages and should be sited, designed and landscaped to integrate with their setting. New developments should not weaken the pattern of existing farmsteads which are mostly divorced from village settings and are often located away from adjacent roads.
- Conserve character of Enclosure Award roads by maintaining and restoring hedges and grass verges.
- Promote the management of chalk grassland in dry valleys and road verges to promote ecological diversity.
- Encourage the conservation, restoration, replacement and management of all primary hedge lines.
- Apply landscape design principles with regard to scale, size, species, choice and edge treatment of new woodlands. Favour broad-leaved species.
- Promote the implementation of landscape integration projects where discordant elements intrude, e.g. main road corridors and transmission lines.
- Due to the elevation, expansiveness and relative isolation of this sensitive arable landscape there should be a predisposition against the inappropriate development of wind power generating facilities.
- The existing extent and general arrangement of woodlands and shelterbelts is distinctive and should be maintained. The composition of the landscape is largely structured by the relationship between landform, woodland and hedgerows in an arable setting.

The Way Forward

The Way Forward

Planning for Diversity in the Landscape

- 7.0.1** The landscape is a constantly changing entity and is subject to many pressures, related to human demands for food, shelter, warmth, employment and trade. As populations, lifestyles and technology change, so will the pressures on the landscape. An example of this lies in the post-war drive for agricultural production which led to much loss of countryside features, e.g. hedges, trees, meandering rivers. Recently, technology has advanced, world food markets have changed and society has demanded consideration of the environment, so can be seen the beginnings of a less intensive use of the land and diversification of the rural landscape. Section 3 of this document discusses the forces for change in the landscape.
- 7.0.2** One of the principal purposes of this assessment is to plan for the future landscape. The emphasis is on conservation or restoration of local character. This can take various forms. In the Wolds, for example, this will involve the conservation of the smooth texture of the landscape and the open, uncluttered expansive views. In many areas of 'open farmland' this might involve restoration of local character by increased tree and woodland planting using species that emphasise underlying diversity. Featureless rivers and streams could once again be lined by black poplars, alders and willows while on the valley edges may be copses of ash with hazel. Drier land could support mixed oak woods while there always would be scope for the many 'exotic' species so important in our landscape, e.g. beech, pines, sycamore. The key to future landscape planning is a recognition of inherent diversity.
- 7.0.3** In recognition of this diversity, landscape guidelines are formulated. These are simple statements of interest which offer planners, developers and countryside managers some assistance in their task of protecting and enhancing diversity in the landscape while balancing the needs for development.
- 7.0.4** In Britain there is no single agency with both responsibility and ability to conserve and enhance rural landscape character. Activities affecting the rural scene can fall within the remit of various Central Government agencies (e.g. DEFRA, EA, Forestry Authority, Natural England, Highways Agency). There is a partnership in place that manages the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB called the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service and they work on behalf of the Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Advisory Committee. Some activities require consent from the Local Planning Authority and preparation of Environmental Statements.
- 7.0.5** Where activities are grant-aided they are usually required to conform to environmental guidelines, e.g. new woodland planting must be carried out with reference to Forestry Commission Landscape Design Guidelines.
- 7.0.6** Some agricultural, leisure and flood defence activities do not require formal consent from any Government agency or Local Planning Authority.

The Way Forward

- 7.0.7** The following section provides a summary of the extent of influence that landscape planners or countryside managers can have over activities which can potentially affect the quality of the landscape, and the extent to which these activities are 'self-regulating', e.g. by means of best practice guidelines or the need for Environmental Assessment. There are many activities in the countryside over which landscape planners have little direct control. However, this need not be a bar to influence through consultation, encouragement, enabling and promoting good practice and actual implementation of works.
- 7.0.8** The section sets out five means by which the Landscape Guidelines can be used and applied in North East Lincolnshire. These points of action are as follows:
- i. making the best use of existing statutory powers;
 - ii. making the best use of existing consultative roles;
 - iii. filling gaps in existing statutory or consultative roles;
 - iv. promoting and targeting existing or new funds, goodwill and resources towards landscape priority areas;
 - v. raising awareness and forging co-operative links between major players in the rural environment.
- 7.0.9** This Landscape Assessment, together with the Guidelines prepared for each Regional Character Area is a key step in the protection, conservation, enhancement and restoration of the Borough's landscapes, offering a systematic description and strategy for each of the many landscape types in North East Lincolnshire.

The Way Forward

Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines

Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines

Introduction

8.0.1 This section describes the existing and possible mechanisms whereby the landscape guidelines can influence decisions which affect the character of North East Lincolnshire's landscape. The existing mechanisms are outlined in paragraphs 8.3 to 8.9 and presented in tabular form in Table 8.1. The extent of influence which landscape planners and countryside managers can exert can be deduced from Current Means of Influence of Landscape Planners and Countryside Managers on Significant Activities. It is evident that some activities with landscape impacts fall outside any direct or indirect influence of landscape planners. Paragraph 8.10 summarises these 'gaps' which presently lie beyond the influence of landscape planners.

8.0.2 The Next Steps section outlines five areas in which landscape planners and countryside managers can use their influence to best effect to ensure the implementation of the landscape guidelines.

Existing mechanisms of influence

8.0.3 The existing situation allows landscape planners to influence decision-making in various ways (as shown in Current Means of Influence of Landscape Planners and Countryside Managers on Significant Activities), as follows:

i. **Activities under direct control of the Local Planning Authority**

8.0.4 Some activities fall substantially under the control of local planning policies and Planning Guidance. Such activities include the siting and detailed design of new housing, mineral workings and some agricultural related development etc. here the landscape planner can exert significant influence.

ii. **Activities only partly within control of Local Planning Authorities**

8.0.5 Some activities can be carried out with little reference to local or national planning guidance. These include activities such as some small scale temporary uses for leisure pursuits or day visits. Here the only applicable control may concern advertising or road signs. Of particular concern is the construction of new agricultural buildings where these do not require consent, although some notification and consultation with the LPA is necessary.

iii. **Activities requiring Environmental Assessment**

8.0.6 Some activities require an Environmental Assessment in accordance with EU regulations. Landscape issues must be considered by the developer and there is scope for landscape planners to comment and suggest modifications or alternatives. Where the activity also requires planning permission there is usually constructive

Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines

liaison between the developer and landscape planner. However, decisions regarding many infrastructure developments tend to be taken at Government level. Here there is less scope for direct influence, although dialogue is often constructive.

iv. Activities grant-aided subject to landscape conditions

8.0.7 Some activities are grant-aided by Central Government but it is possible for landscape planners or countryside managers to comment or suggest modifications. Woodland planting under the English Woodland Grant Scheme is an example of such an opportunity.

v. Activities for which general 'best practice' guidelines are available

8.0.8 There are a number of non-statutory and advisory 'best practice guidelines' available for various activities, e.g. Forestry Commission guidelines; Natural England; and Communities and Local Government guidance regarding quality of design of housing in the countryside. These are extremely useful reference documents and can assist landscape planners and countryside managers in assessing the quality of development or management proposals.

vi. Activities for which specific locally adopted landscape guidance is available

8.0.9 It is also possible to prepare local or topic-specific design guidance which can be adopted by the Local Planning Authority to inform and enforce decisions taken within the planning arena. Such guidance might include this Landscape Assessment and Village Design Statements as proposed by the Natural England.

Landscape Issues outside the influence of existing planning and management guidelines

8.0.10 There are a number of activities that can have significant landscape impact which fall largely outside the influence of the landscape profession. It would be desirable that a landscape perspective influences such activities. The issues of most relevance are:

- i. construction, siting and colour of large agricultural buildings where these do not require planning permission;
- ii. landscape enhancement on a 'whole farm' basis rather than just in specific areas;
- iii. where farm diversification activities which do not require planning permission but might affect the appearance or character of farms in the rural landscape;
- iv. protection of the many archaeological sites which may be of national importance;

Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines

- v. visual enhancement of existing flood defence berms and retention of associated items of local character e.g. sluices, barriers, guard rails, etc.;
- vi. strategic coastal management;
- vii. management of rural roads so as to protect, enhance or add locally appropriate hedges, verges, fencing, signs, ditches, etc.;
- viii. the need for locally adopted Village Design Statements for specific villages which are likely to come under pressure for new housing;
- ix. a problem not always addressed satisfactorily in Environmental Statements is the strategic consideration of radically different alternative approaches. This might be the only way to satisfactorily reduce impact e.g. a new transmission line across the Lincolnshire Wolds could cause significantly more landscape damage than a line across the Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes.

The Next Steps

8.0.11 To ensure the active use and application of these Landscape Guidelines in North East Lincolnshire, five points of action need to be addressed. Some relate to existing Local Authority functions, while others are natural extensions of these functions. In summary these points are:

- i. ***Making the best use of existing powers.***

8.0.12 Planning controls over new development are reasonably extensive. Recent emphasis has been on quality of design and cases have been won at appeal on the basis of quality of design as a material consideration in assessing applications for planning permission.

8.0.13 Control exercised over the size, scale and form of development may be augmented by design guides. Proportionally greater weight is attached to design guides which have been through procedures of consultation and adoption alongside development plans. These can give guidance on appropriate scale, form and type of development, materials and colours for use in different areas. They can supplement the basic criteria of good design and give a clear indication to prospective applicants of the relevant standards which apply. For villages, the design guides could form Village Design Statements, a suggested model from the Countryside Agency's Design in the Countryside and its associated experiments.

8.0.14 The design guides need not necessarily be conservative in their use, but rather seek to ensure that new development meets defined aspects of local distinctiveness and similar high standards of design. In Conservation Areas, where great restraint is required to maintain the distinctive historic patterns and features of development, use of Article 4 Directives can restrict the nature of development which can take place without planning permission and can help exercise greater control in areas particularly sensitive to change.

Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines

ii. **Making the best use of existing consultative roles.**

8.0.15 The role of the planning authority as a consultee to a wide range of agencies and initiatives can be a particular strength. The views of planning authorities on applications for consent for new utility and infrastructure projects, such as highways and power stations, are sought as a matter of course. Linking mitigation and planning gain to the development and sustaining of clearly stated and consistent overall landscape character objectives and targets may be a priority.

8.0.16 Targets for sustaining and reinforcing landscape character can form part of the objectives of habitat, wildlife and other strategies. Countryside management projects (including Farm Woodlands, Environmental Stewardship), environmental enhancement schemes and other initiatives such as recreation strategies can have implications for the landscape. These objectives should be linked to the landscape character and design guides to ensure that these are complementary rather than detrimental.

iii. **Filling in gaps in existing statutory or consultative roles.**

8.0.17 Development of locally-specific best practice guides, together with a financial commitment to implementation of these in pilot areas, may be the way forward in relation to agricultural buildings, flood defence management, rural road management and farm diversification for leisure. These will usually require the involvement of land owners and managers, perhaps in the form of working parties.

8.0.18 Village Design Statements could be prepared by the local authority, perhaps part-funded by aspiring developers.

8.0.19 The need for archaeological protection and enhancement requires additional baseline information if the existing Sites and Monuments Record is incomplete. It should be noted that at the time of writing a study is underway entitled "Historic Landscape Characterisation Project for Lincolnshire" by Lincolnshire County Council. This document will give greater depth to the understanding of how historic processes have shaped the landscape.

8.0.20 The issue of coastal management is very broad and, as noted in the Humberside County Council document 'The Humber Estuary and Coast', requires strategic management planning and an inter-agency approach, amongst which the landscape profession should be represented.

8.0.21 The agreement with the Highways Agency of a 'rural roads hierarchy' for maintenance and leisure uses of some rural roads may allow a form of declassification of some roads so that traditional signage, hedges and ditches are retained or restored in a programme of road maintenance.

Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines

- iv. **Promoting and targeting existing or new funds, goodwill and resources towards landscape priority areas**

8.0.22 In the field of countryside management, there are a number of existing financial support measures, grant schemes and a range of bodies able and willing to give technical advice. One problem has been, and continues to be, the co-ordination of the various grant schemes and sources of advice. Countryside or Environmental management projects, through, for example, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group or Countryside Stewardship, are cost effective and efficient means of achieving change. They have the advantage of offering landowners a 'name' on the end of a telephone and an advocate for their landscape enhancement projects.

- v. **Raising awareness and forging co-operative links between major players in the rural environment**

8.0.23 Recent Government statements are doing much to promote the cause of quality in landscape assessment and design.

8.0.24 Environmental Assessment regulations are encouraging developers to take a more critical view of their own proposals and there are signs of an increasing attention to landscape issues.

8.0.25 However, as Current Means of Influence of Landscape Planners and Countryside Managers on Significant Activities indicates, there are many areas in which there is little financial or legal incentive for developers to actively promote landscape quality in their proposals. This need not be a bar to constructive dialogue between major players in the rural environment. There are examples where bodies with slightly conflicting aspirations have reached an understanding aimed at balancing the needs of each partner.

8.0.26 There is scope for increased co-operation between agencies and bodies. Agreements are more difficult to reach with private enterprise but much has been achieved nationally through joint agreement/sponsorship with major industry. A possible agreement, for example, with farming interests (E.g. Country Landowners Association) could relate to the impact of large agricultural buildings.

8.0.27 The presence of landscape professionals on working parties tackling such issues would be highly desirable and should be encouraged where appropriate.

Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines

Landscape Issue	Extent of Influence						Comment
	Substantially under Local Authority Controls	Only minor details under Local Authority Controls	Require Environmental Assessment Opportunity for comment	Subject to Government Grant Aid Opportunity for comment	Non-Statutory or advisory Best Practice Guidance available	Local or Specific Statutory or Adopted Guidance available	
KEY • Generally available, § Available in certain cases, Not generally available							
Use of set-aside land	~	~	~	•	•	~	
'Whole farm' landscape management	~	~	~	•	•	~	E.g. Countryside Stewardship
New agricultural buildings	§	•	~	~	~	~	Major landscape issue
Change of use of farm buildings	§	§	~	~	~	~	
Farm diversification for leisure etc.	§	§	~	~	~	~	Potentially significant
New farm water storage reservoirs	•	~	~	~	~	~	
Hedgerow protection and management	~	~	~	§	~	~	Hedgerow Regulations
Short rotation coppice	~	~	~	•	~	~	
New woodlands	~	~	~	•	~	~	Woodland Strategy
Management of farm woodlands	~	~	~	•	•	~	FC bulletins
Management of ancient woodlands	~	~	~	§	§	~	FC guidelines

Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines

Landscape Issue	Extent of Influence						Comment
	Substantially under Local Authority Controls	Only minor details under Local Authority Controls	Require Environmental Assessment Opportunity for comment	Subject to Government Grant Aid Opportunity for comment	Non-Statutory or advisory Best Practice Guidance available	Local or Specific Statutory or Adopted Guidance available	
KEY	● Generally available, § Available in certain cases, ~ Not generally available						
Management of species of rich grassland	~	~	~	§	~	~	
Management of rights of way	●	~	~	●	●	~	
Implementation of new paths/cycle routes	●	~	●	~	●	~	
New quarries/landfill	●	~	~	~	●	~	Government publications
Disused quarries - uses	§	§	§	~	●	~	
Protection for archaeology	§	~	§	~	§	~	
New large industrial buildings	●	~	§	~	~	~	
Existing large industrial buildings	~	~	~	~	~	~	
Existing transmission lines	~	~	~	~	~	~	
New transmission lines	§	●	●	~	§	~	Holford and NGC rules
New windfarms	●	~	●	~	§	~	
New major highways	●	●	●	~	●	~	

Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines

Landscape Issue	Extent of Influence						Comment
	Substantially under Local Authority Controls	Only minor details under Local Authority Controls	Require Environmental Assessment Opportunity for comment	Subject to Government Grant Aid Opportunity for comment	Non-Statutory or advisory Best Practice Guidance available	Local or Specific Statutory or Adopted Guidance available	
KEY	● Generally available, § Available in certain cases, ~ Not generally available						
Rural road maintenance	§	~	~	~	~	~	
Leisure uses of rural roads	~	~	~	~	~	~	
New housing development: siting	●	~	~	~	§	§	Village Design Guides needed
New housing: design and materials	●	~	~	~	§	§	Village Design Guides needed
New leisure developments	●	~	§	~	~	~	
New coastal defences	~	●	§	§	§	§	
Existing coastal defences	~	~	§	~	~	§	
Strategic coast/estuary planning	~	●	~	~	~	~	Humber Coast and Estuary Plan
New flood defences	§	~	§	~	~	~	
Existing flood defences	~	~	~	~	~	~	
Enhancements of protection of Lincolnshire Wolds AONB	§	This is a nationally designated area of high value landscape and is managed by the Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Advisory Committee					

Table 8.1 Current Means of Influence of Landscape Planners and Countryside Managers on Significant Activities

Mechanisms for Implementation of the Landscape Guidelines

Further Advice

Further Advice

Further advice on issues of landscape character or design in North East Lincolnshire can be obtained from:

Heritage & Landscape Officer
Development Management Services - Conservation
Regeneration
Origin Two
2 Origin Way
Grimsby
DN37 9TZ

Tel: 01472 323536

Fax: 01472 324216

Email: planning@nelincs.gov.uk

Other Useful Contacts

Other Useful Contacts

Trees & Woodlands Officers - Tel: 01472 324273/324271

Conservation Officer - Tel: 01472 324266

Archaeologist - Tel: 01472 323586

Development Management Services
Regeneration
North East Lincolnshire Council
Origin Two
2 Origin Way
Grimsby
DN37 9TZ

Fax - 01472 324216

Ecology Officer - Tel: 01472 323436

Environmental Improvement
Community Services
North East Lincolnshire Council
Origin One
1 Origin Way
Grimsby
DN37 9TZ

Document Availability

Document Availability

If you would like to receive this information in another language or in another format such as large print, Braille or on audio tape, please contact:

Heritage & Landscape Officer
Development Management Services - Conservation
Regeneration
Origin Two
2 Origin Way
Grimsby
DN37 9TZ

Tel: 01472 323536

Fax: 01472 324216

E-mail: planning@nelincs.gov.uk

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